TUESDAY
December 30, 2025

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
18 Pages ₹ 6.00

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RNI No. KARENG/1970/49945

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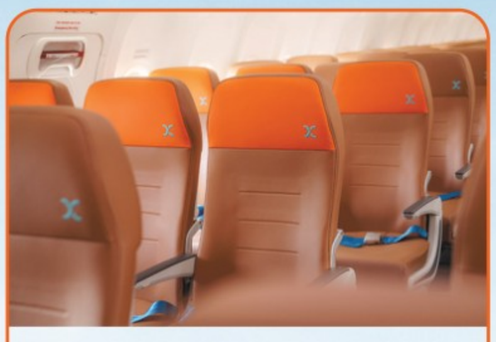

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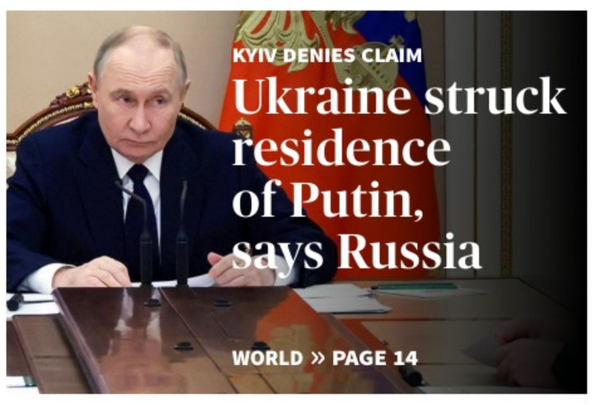
RURAL EMPLOYMENT

Fake demand will not be entertained: Centre

NEWS » PAGE 11



KYIV DENIES CLAIM

Ukraine struck residence of Putin, says Russia

WORLD » PAGE 14

'GAS OUTPUT LAG'

Govt. seeks $30 billion redress from RIL, BP

BUSINESS » PAGE 13

DATA POINT

A puzzling credit-growth disconnect

FY17-FY19 showed a significant anomaly

OPINION » PAGE 9

DOMINANT

Indian women will aim for a complete sweep

SPORT » PAGE 15

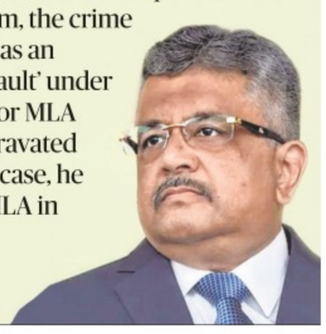
SC stays suspension of sentence of former BJP MLA in Unnao rape case

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed the operation of a Delhi High Court order suspending the prison sentence and granting bail to former MLA and expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who was convicted of the kidnap and rape of a minor induced to come to his residence in 2017 on the false pretext of providing her with a job.

Appearing before a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, the Central Bureau of Investigation, which probed the case, sought justice for the survivor, saying, "We are answerable to the child who was only 15 years old when this gruesome crime happened to her."

> If a person is in a dominant position over the victim, the crime should be interpreted as an 'aggravated sexual assault' under the POCSO. So, an MP or MLA would be guilty of aggravated sexual assault... In this case, he was a very powerful MLA in that area
>
> **TUSHAR MEHTA**
> Solicitor-General of India



During the hearing, the top court noted that the High Court had not agreed with the trial court's conviction of Sengar under Section 5(c) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta said the term "public servant" used in Section 5(c) must be interpreted to include any person in a "dominant position" to the survivor. "If a person is in a dominant position over the victim, the crime should be interpreted as an 'aggravated sexual assault' under the POCSO Act. So, an MP or an MLA would be guilty of aggravated sexual assault... In this case, he was a very powerful MLA in that area," Mr. Mehta argued.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

'TEMPORARY RELIEF'

» PAGE 10

SC pauses its judgment on Aravalli, moots new panel

Bench headed by CJI keeps November 20 decision upholding Centre's definition of the mountain system in abeyance; it proposes panel to analyse possibility of adverse ecological consequences

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday kept in abeyance its November 20 judgment upholding a government expert panel definition restricting the world's oldest surviving mountain system, the Aravalli Range, to hills sporting an elevation of 100 metres or above, and hill clusters, slopes, and hillocks located within 500 metres of each other.

"This stay shall remain in effect until the present proceedings reach a state of logical finality, ensuring that no irreversible administrative or ecological actions are taken based on the current framework," the court ordered. It directed that no fresh or renewed mining leases should be given without prior permission of the top court.

> Independent expert opinions [on the Aravallis] must be obtained and considered after consulting with all the stakeholders. There is a need to resolve ambiguities and provide definitive guidance
>
> **SURYA KANT**
> Chief Justice of India

A three-judge Bench, headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, took *suo motu* cognisance of the widely publicised public apprehension over the restrictive definition, especially that only 1,048 Aravalli hills out of a total of 12,081 in Rajasthan alone would meet the 100-metre elevation threshold and, consequently, the lower ranges would be "stripped off" the environmental protection due to them. The court agreed that if true, it would be a "significant regulatory lacuna" in safeguarding the Aravalli.

The Bench proposed the constitution of a high-powered committee to analyse whether "sustainable mining" or "regulated mining" within the newly demarcated Aravalli areas, notwithstanding regulatory oversight, would result in any adverse ecological consequences.

"Independent expert opinions must be obtained and considered after consulting with all the stakeholders. There is a need to resolve ambiguities and provide definitive guidance," Chief Justice Kant said. The committee would assess the areas no longer covered by the definition, specifically whether such exclusion risks their eventual degradation, thereby compromising the overall ecological integrity of the Aravalli Range.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

NEARBY

Mandya saw over half of communal incidents in State

BENGALURU
Mandya, traditionally not considered a communally-sensitive region, unlike the coastal districts, reported more than half of the communal incidents in the State over the past two years. Of 54 cases booked in the State during this period, 29 cases were in Mandya. » PAGE 6

Metro, BMTC extend services on New Year eve

BENGALURU
To facilitate safe and convenient travel for revellers, Namma Metro and BMTC have announced extension of metro and bus services in the city on Wednesday night. » PAGE 2

Holiday watch

Snow patrol: BSF jawans patrol the Gulmarg ski resort in Kashmir on Monday amid tight security ahead of the New Year. IMRAN NISSAR

Fire on Tata Ernakulam Express kills one; over 150 passengers evacuated

B. Madhu Gopal
VISAKHAPATNAM

A passenger was killed in a fire that engulfed two air-conditioned coaches of train no. 18189 Tatanagar-Ernakulam Express at the Yelamanchili railway station, about 66 km from here, in the early hours of Monday. The other passengers had a miraculous escape. The cause of the fire is yet to be determined.

The deceased has been identified as Chandrasekhar Sunder (75) of Vijayawada, who was travelling in the B1 coach. Around 40 minutes past midnight, as the train approached the Yelamanchili station in the Vijayawada division of South Central Railway, a passenger noticed the fire in an AC coach. He pulled the emergency chain, bringing the train to a halt and alerting passengers, sources said.

Fire engulfs coaches of the Tata Ernakulam express at Yelamanchili railway station in Andhra Pradesh on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Superintendent of Police, Anakapalli, Tuhin Sinha said, "82 passengers were travelling in one of the affected coaches and 76 in the other. The reservation charts have been verified, and all other passengers are safe. The family members of the victim have been informed."

The Railways have opened helplines to provide information on the accident and running of trains. They are 7815 909386 (Yelamanchili); 5693 05669 (Anakapalli); 7815 909479 (Tuni); 7382 629990 (Samalkot); 0883-2420 541/43 (Rajahmundry); 7569 305268 (Eluru) and 0866-2575167 (Vijayawada). The Visakhapatnam-Rajahmundry passenger (train no. 67286), leaving Visakhapatnam on Monday, and the Rajahmundry-Visakhapatnam (67285) service, scheduled to leave Rajahmundry on Tuesday, have been cancelled.

Train no. 17268 Visakhapatnam-Kakinada Express, leaving Visakhapatnam on Monday, has been cancelled.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

'Alternative housing for families hit by demolition at Kogilu'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Nine days after Bangalore Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) demolished more than 150 houses in Kogilu Layout in Yelahanka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday announced that the displaced families would be provided alternative houses in Baiyyappanahalli, located about 7 km from the demolition site.

He said the decision was taken on humanitarian grounds and that eligible beneficiaries would be allotted houses from January 1, though they had encorached upon government land.

The swift move came after a nudge from AICC general secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal who spoke to the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar expressing "serious concern" over the demolitions.

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar at the site where houses were demolished in Kogilu Layout.

On Monday, the Chief Minister reiterated that notices had been issued to all occupants, informing them that the land belonged to the government and directing them to vacate. "Despite this, they did not vacate," he said, adding that houses had been built on a garbage landfill. "People have been living in illegal sheds there since around 2020-21," he said.

"Illegal encroachment cannot happen without the knowledge of Tahsildars and other officials. I have instructed the Revenue Department and Corporation authorities to take action so that such incidents do not recur," Mr. Siddaramaiahsaid. He added that officials had been instructed to identify eligible families living in the illegal sheds and submit a list within two days.

"There were 1,087 houses in Survey No. 23 of Baiyyappanahalli and that, after verification, eligible families would be allotted houses in a multi-storey residential complex there. The cost of each house is about ₹11.20 lakh. State and Central government subsidies are available for general category beneficiaries as well as for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) will provide ₹5 lakh per house," Mr. Siddaramaiah said.

The Chief Minister added that after subsidies, general category beneficiaries would receive assistance of ₹8.7 lakh, while SC/ST beneficiaries would receive ₹9.5 lakh. The remaining amount of ₹2.5 lakh for the general category and ₹1.7 lakh for SC/STs, would be provided as loans, with Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan agreeing to facilitate the lending process.

Verification of beneficiaries will be completed in two days, he said, adding that the Housing Minister had been entrusted with ensuring that the families are provided houses from January 1. "We are making alternative arrangements on humanitarian grounds," Mr. Siddaramaiah said.

IIP growth climbs to 25-month high of 6.7% in November

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) growth reached a 25-month high of 6.7% in November, driven by broad-based gains led by manufacturing and capital goods sectors, data released by the Union Statistics and Programme Implementation Ministry on Monday showed.

The data revealed that the November IIP growth was last surpassed by the 11.9% in October 2023. Within the IIP, the manufacturing output growth accelerated to a 25-month high of 8%. This was on a relatively high base of 5% in November 2024. It was significantly faster than the 1.8% in October 2025. "While the year-on-year IIP growth surged to a 25-month high of 6.7% in November 2025 from 0.5% in October 2025, this upswing largely reflects the shift in the festive calendar, restocking after the festive season sales, as well as some normalisation in activity across mining and electricity segments following the excess unseasonal rains in the previous month," Aditi Nayar, chief economist, ICRA Ltd., said.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

I want to contribute to women in sport in general and in India

The Belgian star feels the style of women's hockey in the country is fascinating and says she enjoys watching the team in action; the Delhi SG Pipers chief coach reckons it is important for girls to play sport at the highest level

INTERVIEW

Sofie Gierts

Uthra Ganesan

Sofie Gierts has been around hockey for a long time. A former Belgian star with more than 100 international caps, a rare female head coach in the competitive world of men's hockey with Belgium's top-tier Royal Uccle, assistant with the Mannheimer HC women's squad in Germany and founder of the Antwerp Diamonds FC, a girls-only football club, Gierts wears multiple hats.

And she is game for more, joining Delhi SG Pipers as the chief coach for their women's team in the Hockey India League. The 46-year old spoke to *The Hindu* about her plans and her views on Indian hockey. Excerpts:

What brings you to the Hockey India League, how did it happen?

I've been following the HIL since it existed the first time around. It was a big thing in hockey, Tom Boon was drafted for $80,000 or something, it was a big thing. I thought it was a great idea to boost the game in India and I always had it at the back of my mind that we should do it for women as well. We offered the idea to the FIH but that again is difficult. And when they launched it for women last year, I wanted to be a part of that.

I want to contribute to women in sport in general and in India. I was in Bhubaneswar a few years ago as the instructor for a course and I thought the potential was so amazing. It's a big part of my life, to invest in women's sport. I was an international player but I was a woman in the federation, so I was not always having what we needed.

I do this in Belgium, where I used to coach a men's team. I also founded a football club in Antwerp, only for girls, because the men's teams didn't want girls. My main driver is to come here and contribute something that is necessary for girls to play sports on a high level. And we had Emma Puvrez and Elodie Picard playing last year – they are my hockey daughters, they play with my daughter now - and they told me so many stories about it.

I had sent my CV last year also but nobody replied. But then the Delhi SG Pipers called up this time and I was only willing to do it.

So what was the feedback you got?

Well, the troubles that have been mentioned, I don't know. because I didn't experience it. Of course India is different from Europe. But what I did hear from the Belgian girls was so much positivity, so much caring about the Indian players and admiration for them, they felt like they could really contribute to something. So that was a good thing.

Have you seen the Indian women's team? What are your impressions?

Yeah, of course, I follow international hockey. Unfortunately, you see them only during the big tournaments at the venue and hockey is not broadcast all the time everywhere. So it's a bit difficult to follow sometimes. But I saw them during the Pro League in Antwerp. It's a shame they're out now. But I really enjoy watching them because it's such a different style of hockey. I also played a lot against India and I'm always impressed by their abilities, not just technically but also how to hit the ball, how to handle the ball. It's something we have forgotten in Europe, we're not trained to that any more. It's all power and speed, we're losing that touch. And I think world hockey needs both.

When I played against India, we were not at or near the top and so for us, it was a great moment, we knew it would be tough. Because against India, we never know what's going to happen. It's chaotic, it can go everywhere. When you play Australia or Germany, you have an idea about the play, the structure. That's one thing that's still there - but that chaos can also be a strength.

What are your plans for the Hockey India League and your team?

It's very difficult to say right now 'I want to play this kind or style of hockey'. First, we do not have the full squad yet. Second, I am not a coach that imposes my idea or tells the girls 'this is what we have to do'.

I am more of a coach that says, 'this is the quality we have, let's reinforce it.' And from that we will find a way to have a team that is competitive. I am a coach that is at my best when I can relate to my players – I want them to express what they like or not, I want them to feel well, be ready to be pushed to take decisions on the pitch.

You are among the rare women coaches to head a men's team at the top level. How different is it handling the two?

From the outside, it can be very different, because men and women are not the same. They are different. But from a coaching perspective, I just do the job. My job is to make sure my players do the best they can. As a coach, I have to adapt to them, make sure they perform at their highest possibilities. And it is the same for men and women. I must say that in Belgium, it has never been a question or a discussion because of my gender. But yes, so many things are different. The dynamics, the emotions. Then again, it's all about the relationship you build with players. For me, I have as much emotional issues with the men's team as with the women. They just express it differently but that doesn't mean it's not there.

What do you think needs to be done to bring more women into men's sports?

I think it starts with women getting an opportunity. For me, it was quite by accident. And I could easily have said no because I had never coached a men's team. But I said yes because I knew I had to do it for other women, to show it's possible.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This notice is issued on behalf of My client **Sri. Ramachandra.R S/o Sri.Ramaswamappa** to bring the notice of the general public that following Two Original registered deeds as : **1.**Absolute Sale deed doc.No.9290/2002-03, of Book-I, Volume-2681, at pages 110-114, registered on 05.11.2002 and **2.**Absolute Sale deed doc.No.KRI-1-27073/2003-04 of Book-I, Stored in CD No.KRID15, dated.15.03.2004, both are registered in the office of the sub-registrar K.R.Puram, are missing / lost/ misplaced in respect of schedule property.

If any person/s, firm, company, institution or organization has any claim are holding the afore mentioned document or schedule property, they may contact the undersigned in writing within **7 days** from the date of this notice failing which it will be presumed that there are no claims.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the property bearing **Site No.08,** BBMP Katha No.296/2/3, and 2/4/8, property No.2/3 and 2/4, Situated at **Amani Byrathi Khane Village, K R Puram Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk,** measuring East to West **30 feet,** and North to South : **40 feet,** in the all measuring **1200 Sq.feet,** and bounded as:-

East by : Site No.9, West by : Site No.7, North by : 25 feet Road, South by : Private Property.

H. Prahlada, Advocate & Solicitor,
For H.P.Law, #2, 3rd Floor, Venkateshwara Complex, Yeshwanthpur, Bangalore-560022
M : 7760061073

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is brought to the notice of General Public that our Client is intending to purchase immovable property No.6, Old No. 3, EPID No. 2155993910, situated at 'E' No. 3rd Street, Dharmaraja Koil Street, Shivajinagar, Bangalore, with building standing thereon and bounded on the East by: 'E' No. 3rd Street, West by: Private Property, North by: Private Property, South by: Property belonging to Smt. M.V. Gokula. and measuring on the East: 20 ft, on the West : 22 ft, on the North: 28 ft 3 inchs & on the South: 34 ft, in all measuring 624 sq ft, from its owners 1) Mr. J. SUKUMAR, S/o., Mr. G. Jairam, 2) Mrs. BHARATHI.S, W/o., Mr. J. Sukumar, No. 599, 1st Cross, 2nd Main, Prakash Nagar, B'lore-21. Any person/s having objections to the said transactions can register their claim/s with documentary evidence with the undersigned within 15 days of publication hereof, failing which, our client will proceed with the transactions and any claim/s received thereafter will not be entertained.

H.V. NAVEEN KUMAR RAO
& H.V. SUNIL KUMAR RAO
ADVOCATES
No. 57, 1st Floor, Veerapillai, Street,
Bengaluru-01, Mob: 9341380225

BENGALURU METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT CORPORATION

Traffic Commercial Department, 2nd Floor, Shanthinagar TTMC, K.H. Road, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-560 027.

No: BMTC/CO/TR/COM/1913/3940/2025-26 Date: 26.12.2025

TENDER NOTIFICATION NO: 30/2025-26
(e-Procurement Platform)

Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation invites bids from the interested Persons/Agency/company on monthly license fee basis for **General Stalls (built and Open space), Refreshment Rooms, Commercial / Office Space and Prestige Apartment Flat** through e-procurement platform.

Date of Pre-Bid meeting	**07.01.2026 at 11:30 hrs. Place:** Chief Traffic Manager (Com) Chamber, 2nd Floor, Central Offices, BMTC, Shanthinagar.
Last date for submission of bids	**28.01.2026 up to 17:00 hrs.**
Date of Opening Technical and Financial bids	**29.01.2026 at 17:05 hrs.**

For further details on license fees, EMD, Area and other conditions log on to: **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** & Contact no: **09240214000, 09240214001, 22371090, 22340060, 22340948** or **7760997519 & 7760991222** E-mail: **ctmc@mybmtc.com.**

Sd/- Chief Traffic Manager (Com) (Tender Inviting Authority)

KARNATAKA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

No. 16 C-1, Millers Tank Bed Area, Vasanthanagara,
Bengaluru-560052. Phone: 080-22268677/78/79 Fax: 080-22268667
Email: kerc-ka@nic.in Website: https://kerc.karnataka.gov.in

No: KERC/DD(Tariff)/2025-26/1378 Date: 24.12.2025

NOTICE

Sub: Draft Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (Roadmap for Reducing Cross-Subsidy and Cross Subsidy Surcharge) Regulations, 2025 for the notice of public for filing views / suggestions / objections / comments - reg.

The draft Regulations on the above subject have been published in the State Gazette on 18th December, 2025. The same is available on the Commission's website **https://kerc.karnataka.gov.in**

Interested persons may file their views / suggestions / objections / comments, if any, on the above draft regulations to the **Secretary, KERC, No. 16, C-1, Miller Tank Bed Area, Vasanthanagar, Bengaluru-560052 within 30 (Thirty) days** from the date of publication in the official gazette.

Sd/- Secretary
DIPR/CP/4698/2025-26 For Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission

महाराष्ट्र शासन
कार्यकारी अभियंता,
सार्वजनिक बांधकाम (दक्षिण) विभाग, पुणे– ४११००१
दुरध्वनी क्रमांक ०२०/२६१२१७६५
Web- www.mahapwd.gov.in &
e-mail - integratedpune.ee@mahapwd.gov.in

प्रमाणपत्र

संदर्भ :– ई–निविदा सूचना क्रमांक ७४ सन २०२५–२६
जा.क्र.लेखा /निविदा/११०६२/ सन २०२५ दि.१९/१२/२०२५.

प्रमाणित करण्यात येते की, पुणे जिल्हयातील नगरपालिका व नगरपंचायती निवडणूक सन २०२५ मधील आचारसंहिता लागलेल्या भागामधील कामे या जाहिरातीत नाहित, यातून आदर्श आचारसंहितेचा भंग होत नाहि. तरी या कामांसंदर्भात आचारसंहिता संबंधीत काही प्रश्न उपस्थित झाल्यास त्याची सर्व जबाबदारी या कार्यालयाची राहिल.

सही/–
कार्यकारी अभियंता,
सार्वजनिक बांधकाम (दक्षिण) विभाग,
पुणे– ४११००१.

DGIPR/2025-26/4845

Government of Punjab
OFFICE OF MANAGING DIRECTOR-CUM-DIRECTOR STATE TRANSPORT, PUNBUS, PUNJAB
(JEEVEANDEEP BUILDING SECTOR 17-A CHANDIGARH
PH: 0172-3704606)

E-NOTICE INVITING BID

Punjab State Bus Management Company (PUNBUS) invites online e-tender from the bidders in two bid system (Technical & Commercial) for "Selection of Bidder for Procurement on Kilometer Scheme basis of 100 (Hundred) Ordinary buses (As per AIS 052 Bus Code Or Latest and AIS:153), BS VI, OBD-II, Type-II, Diesel Engine, Heavy Passenger Vehicle-M3, 52+2 Seater with Standard fitments for Inter-City Operation".

1. Availability of tender document : https://eproc.punjab.gov.in/
2. Tender Document uploading date : 01-01-2026 at 01.00 PM
3. Payment mode : Online through NEFT/RTGS/IPG/Net Banking
4. Pre-bid meeting : 07-01-2026,11:30AM, O/o MD, PUNBUS
5. Last date and time of queries : 09-01-2026,11:30 AM (email id:tandcpunbus@gmail.com
6. Date time for uploading of replies to Pre-bid queries 14-01-2026, 01:00 PM
7. Bid Submission Deadline : 28-01-2026, 01:00 PM
8. Technical Bid opening date : 28-01-2026, 03:00 PM

For participation in the above e-tender, the Bidder shall have to get themselves registered with http://eproc.punjab.gov.in and get ID & password. Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering process. Please contact helpdesk No. 0172-2704606 for any query for participation in the above e-tender.

1746/12/2025-26/6528 **Executive Director (Technical), PUNBUS**

KMF Karnataka Co-Operative Milk Producers' Federation Limited

KMF Complex: Dr. M.H. Marigowda Road, DRC Post, Bangalore-560 029.
Tel: 080-25536625, 080-25536105

IFT No: KMF/ENGG/ Tubuler Heat Exchanger to Mother Dairy/ 02073/2025-26/ Date: 29-12-2025

SHORT TERM RE- TENDER NOTIFICATION (Call -2)
[TWO COVER SYSTEM] [THROUGH KPP PORTAL ONLY]

Karnataka Milk Federation Ltd; Bangalore invites Short term tender from the eligible manufacturers/authorised dealer through KPP Portal for the works mentioned in the table below. The interested manufacturers /Suppliers who have handled similar kind of works may participate in the tender as indicated below, by logging on to website https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in and also contact Help desk E-mail; hphelpdesk.blr@intarvo.com and helpline no. 080-25501227/ 25501216.

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Qty.	EMD in Rs.	Period of completion
1	Design, supply, Installation & Commissioning of 30 KLPH-Tubular Heat Exchanger at Mother Dairy, Yelahanka.	1 Job	36,000/-	3 Months

1. Tender schedules may be downloaded from dated: 30-12-2025 To 06-01-2026 up to 4.00 PM
2. Last date for Tender submission on date: 06-01-2026 up to 4.00 PM
3. Tender [Part 1] to be opened on date: 07-01-2026 at 4:30 PM.

For Karnataka Milk Federation Limited
Sd/- Director [Engineering-2]

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - I, BENGALURU

No:4, Second Floor, LIC Jeevan Mangal Building,
Residency Road, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560025

DRC No. 14074 Form No. 14 (See Regulation 33(2))

Canara Bank, Sports Authority of India Branch, No.402, "BKR Plaza", ITI Layout, 3rd Phase, Naidanahalli , Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560 039. ...Certificate Holder

Versus

M/s. Kondajji Products India Pvt Ltd., & Others ....Certificate Debtor

DEMAND NOTICE

To

1. M/s. Kondajji Products India Pvt. Ltd., No. 404, Veerabhadreshwara Complex, 6th Main Kalikamba Temple Road, Kengeri Upanagar, Bengaluru-560 060, Rep by its Managing Director, Mr. Veeranna Obajahalli. Also at : Sir M. V. Layout, Muddaiana Palya, Vishwaneedham Post, Bengaluru - 560 091.
2. Mr. Veeranna Obajahalli S/o. Sri O. Kalliverappa, Managing Director, M/s. Kondajji Products India Pvt. Ltd., No. 195, Sagar Nilaya, Gnanabharathi 1st Block, Valagerahalli, Bengaluru - 560 060.
3. Mrs. Meena Patil W/o. Sri Veeranna Obajahalli, Director: M/s. Kondajji Products India Pvt. Ltd., No. 195, Sagar Nilaya, Gnanabharathi 1st Block, Valagerahalli, Bengaluru - 560 060.

In view of the Recovery Certificate issued in **O.A. No.337/2017** passed by the Hon'ble Presiding Officer, DRT, Bengaluru on **26.05.2018** an amount of **Rs.47,11,018/-** (Rupees Forty Seven Lakhs Eleven Thousand Eighteen Only) is due against you along with interest and costs from the date of filing of O.A. till relaization.

You are hereby called upon to deposit the above sum within 15 days of the receipt of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made as per rules.

In addition to the sum aforesaid you will be liable to pay :

a)Such interest as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the execution proceedings.

b)All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and other process that may be taken for recovering the amount due.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on **25.02.2019.**

Sd/- (Deepainidvuani S.) Recovery Officer- II
Debts Recovery Tribunal -I, Bengaluru

Note: Attention is invited to Rule 16 of the Second Schedule of the Income Tax Act 1961 read with Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 which is reproduced below:"Rule 16 (1) Where a notice has been served on a defaulter under Rule 2, the defaulter or his representative in interest shall not be competent to mortgage, charge, lease or otherwise deal with any property belonging to him except with the permission of the Debt Recovery Officer, nor shall any Civil Court issue any process against such property in execution of a decree for the payment of money. (2) Where an attachment has been made under this Schedule any private transfer or delivery of the property attached or of any interest therein and any payment to the defaulter of any debt, dividend or other monies contrary to such attachment, shall be void, as against all claims enforceable under the attachment".

Government of Karnataka - Zilla Panchayat
Office of The Executive Engineer,
Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Chikkamagaluru

Ph No.: 08262-220936 e-mail: zpedckm@rediffmail.com
Tender Notice No.: 31/2025-26/2538 Date: 26.12.2025

Tender Notice

Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Chikkamagaluru invites Tenders through K.P.P.P. related to works of Chikkamagaluru, Kadur, Koppa, Mudigere, Kalasa, Tarikere and Ajjampura Taluks in Chikkamaga luru District. Max. Amount put to Tender is Rs.58.00 lakhs and Min. amount is Rs.5.00 lakhs. Details of capability to undertake or of having implemented the works should be attached as per Standard Tender Document KW–1&2. For the said works the documents downloaded from K.P.P.P. can be filled and uploaded from 26.12.2025 to 15.01.2026 up to 5.30 PM. If possible the Financial Bid will be opened on 17.01.2026 at 5.05 PM. If this day is declared as holiday then the next day will be consi dered. Notice can be read on www.kppp.karnataka. gov.in Further details can be obtained by contacting the case worker during office hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Chikkamagaluru

DIPR/CKM/KSMCA/25-26/129/1488

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, DAVANAGERE DIVISION, DAVANAGERE.

No.EE:PWD:Dvg/AE-1:IFT-31:2025-26 Dated:- 26.12.2025

SHOR TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Ref : This office tender notification No. IFT-31/2025-26 dated : 26.12.2025.

The works under Head of Account 3054-03-337-0-05-200 SH Maintenance, Name of work : Road widening and Construction of CC Drain and Footpath of Davanagere-Holalu SH-150 road from ch. 6.50 to 7.00 km at Malagondanahalli village limit in Davanagere taluk amounting to Rs. 150.00 lakhs pertaining to Davanagere sub divisions under the Jurisdiction of PWD, Davanagere division has been called for the tenders from registered Contractors in KPWD for the above works through KPP Portal as per standard tender documents rules.

Tender dates are as mentioned below:

Last Date & time for receipt of tenders 05.01.2026 Time: 16.00
Date & time for opening of Technical Bid 06.01.2026 Time: 16.30
Further details can be obtained from this office in office hours.

DIPR/CTA/KSMCA/ 594/2025-26 **Sd/- Executive Engineer PWD, Davanagere.**

Your feedback will keep us Cleaner, Sharper and Bolder

Call our toll-free number **1800 102 1878**
Or write to us at **customercare@thehindu.co.in**
Scan the QR code to register your feedback

THE HINDU | thehindu businessline | FRONTLINE | SPORTSTAR | The Hindu Young World | THE HINDU

Government of Karnataka - Zilla Panchayat
Office of The Executive Engineer,
Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Chikkamagaluru

Ph No.: 08262-220936 e-mail: zpedckm@rediffmail.com
Tender Notice No.: 31/2025-26/2538 Date: 26.12.2025

Tender Notice

Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Chikkamagaluru invites Tenders through K.P.P.P. related to works of Chikkamagaluru, Kadur, Koppa, Mudigere, Kalasa, Tarikere and Ajjampura Taluks in Chikkamaga luru District. Max. Amount put to Tender is Rs.58.00 lakhs and Min. amount is Rs.5.00 lakhs. Details of capability to undertake or of having implemented the works should be attached as per Standard Tender Document KW–1&2. For the said works the documents downloaded from K.P.P.P. can be filled and uploaded from 26.12.2025 to 15.01.2026 up to 5.30 PM. If possible the Financial Bid will be opened on 17.01.2026 at 5.05 PM. If this day is declared as holiday then the next day will be consi dered. Notice can be read on www.kppp.karnataka. gov.in Further details can be obtained by contacting the case worker during office hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Chikkamagaluru

DIPR/CKM/KSMCA/25-26/129/1488

KMF Karnataka Co-Operative Milk Producers' Federation Limited

KMF Complex: Dr. M.H. Marigowda Road, DRC Post, Bangalore-560 029.
Tel: 080-25536625 / 25536789 Fax: 080-25536105

IFT No: KMF/ENGG/ Ghee Clarifier -NHMPP/02205/2025-26 Date: 29-12-2025

SHORT TERM RE- TENDER NOTIFICATION (2ND CALL)
[TWO COVER SYSTEM] [THROUGH KPP PORTAL ONLY]

Karnataka Milk Federation Ltd; Bangalore invites Short Term tender from the eligible manufacturers/ authorised dealer through KPP Portal for the works mentioned in the table below. The interested manufacturers / Suppliers who have handled similar kind of works may participate in the tender as indicated below, by logging on to website https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in and also contact Help desk E-mail; hphelpdesk.blr@intarvo.com and helpline no. 080-25501227/ 25501216.

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Qty.	EMD in Rs.	Period of completion
1	Design, Supply, Testing, & Commissioning of 2 KL Ghee Clarifier & accessories with SS Valve, Fittings, Bend etc to NHMPP Ramanagar	1 Job	50,000/-	3 Months

1. Tender schedules may be downloaded from dated: 30-12-2025 To 06-01-2026 up to 4.00 PM
2. Last date for Tender submission on date: 06-01-2026 up to 4.00 PM
3. Tender [Part 1] to be opened on date: 07-01-2026 at 4:30 PM.

For Karnataka Milk Federation Limited
Sd/- Director [Engineering-2]

Government of Maharashtra
Public Works Department P.W. Division, Panvel

Telephone No. 022-27452778
E-Tender Notice No. 45 (Open ONLINE)
Year-2025-26
E-mail address:- panvel.ee@mahapwd.gov.in
Fax Number :- 022-27467440

Executive Engineer P.W. Division Panvel invite **B-1** Tender From Registered Contractor with Govt. of Maharashtra Detail Tender Notice Available On **www.mahapwd.gov.in** and **www.mahatenders.gov.in** Portal.

Note:-Total 02 Work include in Tender notice.

Online Tender Download & Bid Preparation Period Date 30.12.2025 At 10.00 AM To Date 06.01.2026 18.00 PM.

Online Tender Bid Preparation Last Date 06.01.2026 at 18.00 AM.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
P.W.Division,
Panvel

DGIPR/2025-2026/4857.

TOWN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BANGARPET

web:bangarpettown.mrc.gov.in, Email id:itstaff_ulb_bangarpet@yahoo.co.in
phone:08153-253222

Sl.No:TMCBPT/Tech/T07/2025-26 Date:23.12.2025

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through Government of Karnataka KPP portal only)

As per Karnataka Transparency in the Public procurement act 1999 and Rules 2000 under Standard Tender documents Rules KW3 the undersigned invites tenders in One and Two cover system for Eligible Contractors through KPP portal. The contractors may submit tenders for works given in the table through KPP portal of the Government of Karnataka **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in).** Further details may be obtained from the office of the undersigned. **(1)** Last date & time for submission of tender **: 12.01.2026 17.00 hrs. (2)** Date & time of opening Technical bid : **15.01.2026 11.00 hrs. (3)** Date & time of opening Financial bid : **19.01.2026 11.00 hrs.**

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimate amount (Rs.in lakhs)	EMD (In Rupees)
1.	DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT52573 Development of Pattabhishekodyanavana park.	94.00	1,27,000/-

Sd/-
Dr. Mythri H.P.S., KAS
Administrator, TMC, Bangarpet
And Assistant Commissioner
Kolar

Sd/-
(Sri V. Sathyanarayana)
Chief Officer
Town Municipal Council
Bangarpet

DIPR/KOLAR/R.O.No:424/KSMC&A/2025-26

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **PRATHYUSHA PURRIGALI** D/o Nandini Purrigali Madegowda, aged 22 years, residing at New No.2, Old No.301/2, Ground Floor, 16th Cross, Sadashivanagar, Near Sadashivanagar Club, Bangalore-560080, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from "PRATHYUSHA RAGHU" to "PRATHYUSHA PURRIGALI", vide affidavit dated 29.12.2025 sworn to before Chandrashekaraiah S, Advocate & Notary, Bengaluru-560091.

IN THE COURT OF THE HON'BLE PRINCIPAL SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE AND J.M.F.C., BENGALURU RURAL DISTRICT AT BENGALURU.
G. & W.C. No. 109 / 2025

Between: 1. Mrs. Manuja,wife of Late Sri. Krishnappa N.R.,aged about 40 years., 2. Ms. Sujana K.daughter of Late Sri. Krishnappa N.R.,aged about 13 years. Represented by her mother and Natural GuardianMrs. Manuja, wife of Late Sri. Krishnappa N.R. Both Petitioners are residing at:No. 74, 'Chowdeshwari', Ward 2, Nagenahalli, Singanayakanahalli, Bangalore North–560 064. ... **Petitioners**

And: NIL … Respondent(s)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, the Petitioners above named have filed a petition under Section 8(2) of the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956 and Section 7 of the Guardians and Wards Act, 1890 seeking for appointment of the 1st Petitioner as guardian of Ms. Sujana K. and her properties as shown in the Schedule hereunder and seeking permission to sell the 2nd Petitioner's undivided share, in the Petition Schedule Property.

Be it known that no caveat has been entered. That the said matter is posted for hearing on **30.01.2026** at 11:00 AM and all persons claiming to have any interest in the appointment of the guardian for Ms. Sujana K. or her properties, and the sale of her undivided share in the Schedule hereunder, are hereby directed to appear before this Court in person, or by pleader duly instructed on the above-mentioned date and time to show cause against the Petitioners, failing which, the said Petition will be heard and decided ex parte.

Schedule Property

Item No. 1: Item A: All that piece and parcel of the agricultural land measuring 19.08 Guntas out of the total extent of 39 Guntas in Survey No. 48/8 situated at Harohalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk;

Item B: All that piece and parcel of the agricultural land measuring 19.08 Guntas out of the total extent of 39 Guntas in Survey No. 48/8 situated at Harohalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk. Both Item A and Item B are bounded on the **East by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 48/9, **West by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 48/7, **North by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 89; **South by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 48/10

Item No. 2: All that piece and parcel of the undeveloped converted land measuring 19 Guntas in Survey No. 89/6A situated at Harohalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, duly converted from agricultural to non-agricultural purpose vide Official Memorandum bearing No. 608549 dated 13.02.2024 issued by the Special District Commissioner, Bangalore and bounded on the **East by:** Land bearing Sy. Nos. 89/6B, 90, **West by:** Land bearing Sy. Nos. 89/8 and 89/5, **North by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 88; **South by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 48.

Item No. 3: All that piece and parcel of the undeveloped converted land measuring 2 Guntas in Survey No. 89/6B situated at Harohalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, duly converted from agricultural to non-agricultural purpose vide Official Memorandum bearing No. 608825 dated 08.02.2024 issued by the Special District Commissioner, Bangalore and bounded on the: **East by:** Land bearing Sy. Nos. 89/6C & 90, **West by:** Land bearing Sy. Nos. 89/6A, **North by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 90; and **South by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 48.

Item No. 4: All that piece and parcel of the undeveloped converted land measuring 2 Guntas in Survey No. 89/6D situated at Harohalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, duly converted from agricultural to non-agricultural purpose vide Official Memorandum bearing No. 608841 dated 08.02.2024 issued by the Special District Commissioner, Bangalore and bounded on the: **East by:** Land bearing Sy. Nos. 89/6E & 90, **West by:** Land bearing Sy. Nos. 89/6C, **North by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 90; **South by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 48.

Item No. 5: All that piece and parcel of the undeveloped converted land measuring 5 Guntas in Survey No. 89/6E situated at Harohalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, duly converted from agricultural to non-agricultural purpose vide Official Memorandum bearing No. 608835 dated 08.02.2024 issued by the Special District Commissioner, Bangalore and bounded on the **East by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 90, **West by:**Land bearing Sy. No. 89/6D, **North by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 90 **South by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 48.

By the Order of the Court, Chief Ministerial Officer,Senior Civil Judge's Court, Bengaluru Rural District, Bengaluru.

Advocate for Petitioners: **Srihari N.S.,**
Unit No. 13, 3rd floor,Sri Venkateshwara Building,No. 56, D.V.G. Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore – 560 004. Date: 29-12-2025

A-12026/2/2023-E-IV
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION

****

VACANCY NOTICE

National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) is a Statutory Body set up by the Central Government in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 8(1) of the National Dam Safety Act, 2021. The Authority shall discharge such functions as per the Second Schedule of the Act as, may be necessary to implement the policy, guidelines and standards evolved by the National Committee on Dam Safety for proper surveillance, Safety inspection and maintenance of specified dams and for such purposes. The National Dam Authority has its Headquarter at New Delhi.

2. Applications are invited from eligible and suitable officers for filling up one post of Chairman in National Dam Safety Authority, New Delhi in the Pay Matrix Level-15 (Rs. 182200-224100/-) on deputation (including short-term contract) basis.

3. Details of the post, eligibility conditions etc. are available at **jalshakti-dowr.gov.in, dopt.gov.in.** and **ndsa.mowr.gov.in.** Applications **(in triplicate)** complete in all respect of suitable and eligible officers and who can be spared immediately in the event of selection may be sent through proper channel to:- The Under Secretary (Estt.IV), Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation. Ministry of Jal Shakti, Room No. 435 (A), Shram Shakti Bhavan, Rafi Marg, New Delhi – 110 001 and by email at **use4-mowr@nic.in** & **soe4-mowr@nic.in**, within a period of 45 days from the date of issue/ publishing of this Advertisement in the Employment News.

4. **Advance copies of application not forwarded through proper channel or application received after the prescribed period or not accompanied with the requisite information/ documents are liable to be rejected.**

(Narayanan Bhattadiri K.P.)
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India
Tele. No.: 011-23716252
Email: use4-mowr@nic.in

CBC 45101/11/0006/2526

THE HINDU IN SCHOOL PRESENTS SCHOOL BUZZ
A Newspaper exclusively curated for School Students

FOUNDER'S DAY CELEBRATED

Arihant Group of Institutions marked their Founder's Day with a formal ceremony at Yuvaka Sanga, Jayanagar, celebrating seven years of growth. The programme was presided over by Chairman Mr. Ashok S. Nagori with Secretary Mr. Sudhir S. Jain. Trustees Mr. Dilip M. Bohra and Mr. Chandragupta S. Jain, managing trustee Ms. Yashaswi Nagori, head of PR and communication Ms. Raveena Nagori, and director Dr. Girish C were present. The event featured the launch of MBA and MCA programmes, unveiling of logo, induction of trustees, and felicitation of faculty and staff.

RASHTROTSAVA CELEBRATED

JGRVK, Ramamurthy Nagar celebrated Rashtrotsava with grandeur, presenting a vibrant cultural programme themed 'Desi Dhara'. Students of Classes III to VI captivated the audience with energetic dance performances reflecting India's rich traditions. The programme began with Deepa Prajwalane by the guest of honour, Sri Nagaraja ji, in the presence of Sri Gajanan Londhe ji of NSTC, NCERT, and Smt. Prema Surendar ji, Pradhanacharya of JGRVK. In his address, Sri Gajanan Londhe ji spoke on Panchamukhi Shikshana, highlighting holistic education and the vision of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's Samagra Vikas. Students showcased folklore and traditional dances from all four directions of Bharath.

SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATED

Sri Jnanakshi Vidhyaniketan School, Rajarajeshwari Nagar celebrated their Silver Jubilee, highlighting their commitment to value-based education rooted in Indian culture and Sanatana Dharma. Founded with the blessings of Paramapujya Sri Sri Sri Tiruchi Mahaswamiji, the school reiterated their mission of inclusive education. Speakers included Dr. Nagalakshmi Chowdhary, Dr. S. Venkateshwara Sharma, author Shri Shantanu Gupta, Shri Swami Nirbhayananda Saraswati Swamiji, Sri Sri Sri Hariharapura Mahaswamiji, and Sri Sri Sri Jayendra Puri Mahaswamiji, who spoke on education, science, spirituality, and social responsibility. Honorary secretary Shri Hayagreeva Acharya was conferred a special title, while a large audience witnessed the cultural presentation 'Aadi Ananta Maaye'.

For Subscription related queries, please contact Raghavendra Desai:
Handphone:+91 9986196254 | Email: desai.rnb@thehindu.co.in

2025 is a witness to huge tragedy, daring heist, murders

A high-profile case caused ripples in March after the arrest of Kannada film actor Ranya Rao, who is the stepdaughter of senior IPS officer from Karnataka K. Ramachandra Rao

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

What began as a day of celebration after the Indian Premier League victory of the Royal Challengers Bengaluru for the first time in 18 years turned deadly on June 4, 2025 evening. FILE PHOTO

2025 THE YEAR THAT WAS

The year 2025 for Bengaluru made its date with history for the wrong reasons when it came to law and order, headlined by a tragic stampede that crushed young lives during long-awaited victory celebrations.

What began as a day of celebration after the Indian Premier League (IPL) victory of the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) for the first time in 18 years turned deadly on June 4, 2025 evening, when 11 people- all aged below 40- died, and 56 were injured, when a massive gathering of fans at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium led to chaos and stampede. As the victims and their families struggled to come to terms with the sudden loss, the organisers, the government and various departments broke into a tussle to fix accountability and evade responsibility. Heads began to roll and in an unprecedented move, the Police Commissioner too was suspended.

It reached a point where questions were raised over whether the stadium in the Central Business District should be used at all for big events. Another major story that made headlines was when a group of men, posing as RBI officials, stole ₹7.11 crore after intercepting a cash van near Ashoka pillar in Siddapura on November 19. The police arrested nine, including constable Annappa Naik, mastermind Gopi (van incharge) and ex-CMS employee Xavier, recovering ₹7.1 crore (98.6%) after a multi-State chase.

While the rapid recovery showcased the police agility, the case exposed shortcomings in cash logistics protocols and the vulnerability of systems when insiders- from both police and private firms- are compromised. The involvement of a serving constable caused major embarrassment to the police force.

Police face action

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The year 2025 saw an unprecedented number of police personnel, as many as 140, across 11 sub-divisions of the Bengaluru City Police suspended for alleged involvement in criminal activities, corrupt practices, and dereliction of duty.

Those suspended range from senior officers, including officers of the city police commissioner rank, to inspectors, sub-inspectors, and constables.

The suspensions were ordered in cases involving bribery, misuse of official position, links with criminal elements, negligence in investigation, failure to perform assigned duties, and violations of service rules.

Gold smuggling

A high-profile case that caused ripples in March was the arrest of Kannada film actor and stepdaughter of senior Indian Police Service officer from Karnataka, K. Ramachandra Rao, Ranya Rao. Ms. Rao, 33, was allegedly caught red-handed while trying to smuggle 14.8 kg of gold, worth over ₹12 crore from Dubai, at the Kempegowda International Airport.

The case sent shock waves through the power corridors of Karnataka, even as multiple central agencies joined the probe along with the DRI. The opposition cited a speculative media report that said two Ministers in the State government were linked to the case. The Congress hit back saying 12 acres of land had been allotted by the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board to a company led by Rao during the previous Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) regime.

Among the other big stories was that of a general surgeon, Mahendra Reddy, allegedly murdering his wife, dermatologist Kruthika M. Reddy, 28, by injecting a controlled anaesthetic agent restricted to operation-theatre use in multiple organs during "gastritis treatment" at the house of her parents in Marathahalli in April 23. Married on May 26, 2024, her death seemed natural, but her sister Dr. Nikitha's post-mortem push revealed overdose via FSL tests on organs and seized equipment, leading to his arrest in October. The case raises questions about oversight of restricted anaesthetic drugs in hospital systems. In another case, Balamurugan, 40, a techie, shot his estranged wife Bhuvaneshwari, 39 – an assistant manager at a bank – four times on the road in Rajajinagar, days after her divorce notice. Minutes after the murder, the accused walked into the Magadi Road Police Station, confessed to the crime and surrendered before the police.

Drug seizures

The police also seized drugs estimated to be ₹160 crore, a record in recent times, booked 1,078 cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in 2025 and arrested 1,543 individuals, including 52 foreigners, resulting in the seizure of 1,446.75 kg of drugs.

Cyber crimes continued to be reported in Karnataka in 2025, recording 13,000 cases till November end, with losses totalling ₹2,038 crore. While the number of cases declined from the previous year (22,478) the average loss per case increased. Additionally, the recovery rate fell below 10%. More than 80% of these cases were reported in Bengaluru.

CM orders stringent security measures for NY celebrations

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a bid to prevent accidents, two-wheeler movement will be prohibited on 50 flyovers in the city on New Year's Eve

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has directed police and other departments to enforce stringent security measures to ensure that no untoward incidents occur during New Year celebrations in Bengaluru.

Chairing a high-level meeting with senior police and departmental officials on Monday, the Chief Minister reviewed the precautionary arrangements being put in place across the city.

Women's safety

Emphasising women's safety, Mr. Siddaramaiah instructed officials to take preventive steps and ensure that celebrations take place without any incidents involving harassment or violence against women. To facilitate safe travel after celebrations, he directed the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) to operate a large number of buses after midnight so that people can return home conveniently.

The Chief Minister also ordered special measures for crowd management at key locations including M.G. Road, Brigade Road, Church Street, Koramangala, and Indiranagar, and stressed the effective use of modern technology to prevent stampedes or other mishaps.

As part of the security plan, 20,000 police personnel will be deployed across Bengaluru, including 1,200 policemen roped in from other districts. He instructed that women police personnel be deployed in larger numbers and that 'Chennamma Teams' be actively utilised. The officials said that the city has been equipped with four control rooms, 78 watch towers, 164 women help desks, and 55 ambulances to manage emergencies. Over the last three days alone, the police have registered 3,500 drink-and-drive cases.

In a bid to prevent accidents, two-wheeler movement will be prohibited on 50 flyovers in the city on New Year's Eve. The meeting was attended by Home Minister G. Parameshwara, Political Secretary to the Chief Minister Naseer Ahmed, Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh, Director-General and Inspector-General of Police M.A. Saleem, Greater Bengaluru Authority Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao, and other senior police officials.

The movement of vehicles on M.G. Road, Brigade Road, St. Marks Road, Resthouse Road, and Residency road has been restricted on Wednesday night till Thursday morning.

All types of vehicles are prohibited on all over bridges in the city (except the flyover leading to the International Airport).

The movement of two-wheelers is also prohibited on the flyover road of the International Airport from 10 p.m. on December 31 to 6 a.m. on January 1.

To prevent the movement of heavy goods vehicles in the Central Business District area, diversions will be made at Old Udaya TV Junction, Khode, Townhall Junction, Chalukya Junction, Domlur, and Mehkri Circles.

Namma Metro, BMTC extend services for New Year's Eve for benefit of revellers

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

To facilitate safe and convenient travel for revellers on New Year's Eve, the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) and Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) have announced the extension of metro and bus services in the city.

The BMRCL has extended its services on the Purple, Green, and Yellow Lines till late night on January 1, 2026. According to a release issued on Monday, metro services will operate beyond midnight on December 31, 2025, with last train departures scheduled in the early hours of New Year's Day.

On the Purple Line, the last train will depart from Whitefield towards Challaghatta at 1.45 a.m., while services from Challaghatta to Whitefield will run till 2 a.m. On the Green Line, trains will operate from Madavara to Silk Institute and in the reverse direction till 2 a.m. Meanwhile, on the Yellow Line, the last train will leave R.V. Road for Bommasandra at 3.10 a.m., while services from Bommasandra towards R.V. Road will run till 1.30 a.m.

The BMTC has announced special midnight bus services from M.G. Road and Brigade Road to various parts of the city to facilitate safe and convenient travel for revellers attending New Year celebrations on the night of December 31. FILE PHOTO

The BMRCL also announced that the last train from Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Station, Majestic, will depart at 2.45 a.m. towards all four directions, Whitefield and Challaghatta on the Purple Line, and Madavara and Silk Institute on the Green Line.

To manage passenger flow, metro services will run at eight-minute intervals on the Purple and Green Lines and at 15-minute intervals on the Yellow Line from 1.30 p.m. on December 31 until the end of the extended service period, according to the release.

Large gathering

"In view of the anticipated large public gathering in the M.G. Road area, the M.G. Road Metro Station will be closed for entry and exit on December 31, 2025, from 10 p.m. However, trains will halt at the adjacent stations, Trinity and Cubbon Park, for boarding and deboarding of passengers," the release stated.

The BMRCL has also issued a ticketing advisory, stating that token sales at Trinity and Cubbon Park stations will stop after 11 p.m. Passengers travelling after 11 p.m. have been advised to purchase journey tickets in advance or use QR tickets or smart cards with sufficient balance.

Midnight bus services

Meanwhile, the BMTC has announced special midnight bus services from M.G. Road and Brigade Road to various parts of the city to facilitate safe and convenient travel for revellers attending New Year celebrations on the night of December 31, 2025.

According to a press release issued by the BMTC, the special services will operate between 11 p.m. on December 31 and 2 a.m. on January 1, depending on traffic conditions. The special buses will depart from M.G. Road Metro Station and Brigade Road and connect key areas across Bengaluru. Services will be operated to destinations including Electronics City, Jigani, Sarjapur, Kengeri KHB Quarters, Janapriya Township, Nelamangala, Yelahanka (including 5th Stage), Bagalur, Hosakote, Channasandra, Kadugodi, Banashankari, Jeevan Bima Nagar, Central Silk Board, and Koramangala. Both G-series and regular route buses have been earmarked to cover these corridors.

In addition to the direct services from M.G. Road and Brigade Road, the BMTC has also made arrangements to operate buses from major bus stations and junctions across the city. These include Kempegowda Bus Station (KBS), K.R. Market, Shivajinagar, Koramangala, Kadugodi, Kengeri, Sumanahalli, Goraguntepalya, Yeshwantpur, Yelahanka, Shanthinagar, Banashankari, Hebbal, and Central Silk Board.

Two policemen in the dock for harassment

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Two policemen are in the dock for allegedly harassing a group of four men returning home late at night in Baiyyappanahalli and forcing them to pay ₹500 for 'venturing out' in what they claimed was a 'sensitive area'. The incident occurred on Sunday night when they booked a cab from Indiranagar to Baiyyappanahalli. While walking towards their residence, they were intercepted by two beat policemen in Sadanandanagar.

The policemen reportedly questioned them for being out late at night and claimed the area was under "high alert" following a robbery. Despite the men explaining their identity and reason for being there, the policemen allegedly refused to let them go.

According to the victims, the policemen threatened to book them under the Karnataka Police Act and warned that a Hoysala patrol vehicle would be called to take them to the police station. When the men objected, the policemen claimed they had the authority to do so and allegedly produced an old form dated 2022 to make the threat appear official.

They initially demanded ₹1,000 to let them go, which was later negotiated to ₹500, which the victims described as payment for the "crime of venturing out at night".

The entire conversation was recorded on a mobile phone, and the victims later raised a complaint on social media, tagging the Bengaluru City Police.

3 inspectors suspended

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh on Monday ordered the suspension of three police inspectors following a massive drug seizure carried out by inter-State agencies. The inspectors are accused of failing to prevent the storage of a huge quantity of drugs in their jurisdictions.

The suspended officers are inspectors attached to the Kothanur, Avalahalli and Bagalur police stations.

The action followed an operation led by Maharashtra Anti-Narcotics Task Force, which led to the seizure of a large drug consignment.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are informed that my client **Mr. P. SUBRAMANI**, intends to purchase Property bearing Agricultural land bearing **Survey No. 47/11**, Measuring **01 (One) Acre - 35 (Thirty Five) Guntas**, Situated at **CHIKKANEKKUNDI VILLAGE**, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, bounded on; **East by:** Shanbhogi inamthi land belonging to Sri. Narayanareddy; **West by:** Land belonging to Sri.Narayan Reddy S/o Nyathappa; **North by:** Land belongs to Sri. Appojappa S/o Thimmareddy; **South by:** Government Road **From Mr. B.Manjunath, Mrs. Shyamala.R, Mr. Shreyas .M, Miss. Rithiksha .M are acquired the above said land through Judgment and Decree dated:07/04/2022 passed in R.A.No.5032/2018, by filing Regular Second Appeal No.720/2022 before the High Court of Karnataka at Bangalore.**

Any persons having any claim or interest in or to the said property or any part thereof through sale, exchange, mortgage, gift, trust, inheritance, bequest, possession, lease, lien, easement or otherwise is/are required to forward their claim to the said property, to the undersigned, along with relevant supporting documents thereof, **within 15 (Fifteen) days** from this date.

In the absence of any claims within the above said period, it shall be deemed that there are no such claims or that if there are any claims and they have not been made, it shall be deemed to have been waived and a valid and binding conveyance will be executed in my client's favour without any further reference in this regard.

P. NAGAMUNI REDDY,
Advocate, SNN Associates,
No. 8/1, T. Krishna Reddy Layout,
1st Main Road, Horamavu Main Road,
Banaswadi, Bangalore – 560 043,
9945159840 / 9901000008

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public are hereby notified that, my clients have entered into a Sale agreement dtd 09.12.2025 in respect of immovable property bearing residential **Site No.30**, Property No. 30-16, New E-PID No.9500496383, situated at Katriguppe Village owned & possessed by one **Sri.Ramachandra Deshpande** S/o Late Anand Rao Deshpande for a valuable sale consideration & the said property is more fully described in the schedule hereunder hereinafter called the Schedule property.

if any person/s have any Claim/interest in respect of the schedule property, the same may be notified to the address given below in writing together with supporting documents within **15 (fifteen) days** from the publication of this notice. If no claims or objections received within stipulated period, my clients shall be at liberty to proceed with Sale transaction in respect of the aforesaid property. Claims/objections if any received on expiry of the stipulated period will be ignored.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece & parcel of the immovable property bearing residential **Site No.30**, Property No.30-16, New E-PID No. 9500496383, situated at **Katriguppe Village, Uttarahalli Hobli,** Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru Urban Presently comes under the limits of Bruhath Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Ward No.164- Vidyapeeta Ward, Bengaluru, measuring **East to West 30 feet and North to South 50 feet** together with residential house consisting of Ground Flr measuring 875 Sq.ft and First Flr measuring 655 Sq.ft, in total measuring 1530 Sq.ft provided with water& power supply & bounded on:

East By: Premises No.43
West By: Premises No.19
North By: Premises No.31, South By: Road

A.T. MANOHAR, Advocate
No.55, 'SAI SADANA', 13th'A'Cross,
Sarakki Gate, 1st Phase, JP.Nagar,
B'lore Blore-78.**Cell: 99029-36363**
Dt: 24/12/2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my clients, intends to purchase the schedule property mentioned below from its owner M/s.ANASUYA INVESTMENTS, a Partnership firm having its office at No.101, old No.50, 3rd Cross, Maramma Temple Street,K.G. Nagara,Bengaluru-560019,. represented by its partners Sri. Duvvuru Yugendar, Smt. Duvvuru Anuradha, Sri.Duvvuru Venkataramana Reddy, Sri.Sannareddy Rajgopal Reddy. All persons having any claim, objections, right, title or interest in respect of the schedule property or the transaction may file his/her / their objections in writing with documentary evidence to the under signed within 15 days from the date of Publication of this notice, failing which it will be deemed as no claims and my clients will proceed to complete the proposed transaction.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the commercial property bearing EPID No.2908905644, Property No.49 (Old Site Nos.133, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139 & 140) situated at Kaniyara Colony Road, Chamrajpet, Ward No.141, Azad Nagar Bengaluru-560018, built on site measuring 53.5' x 99' totally measuring 5296 square feet, consisting of Stilt, Ground, First, Second and Third floor with total built up area of 17400 Square feet and bounded on: East by Kaniyara colony Road, West by: Private Property bearing old No.141 of Mrs. Kasthri, North by: Private Property & South by: Narrow Lane.

S. C. Rajesh Kumar,
Advocate
No. 387 & 388, 25th 'B' Main
22nd Cross, Sector-2, HSR Layout,
Bengaluru-560102. Mob.: 9448239153

Date: 30-12-2025 Bengaluru

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of general public that our client is interested in purchasing residential property bearing New municipal No.38/5, Property No.7/38/5 (Old No.11) and (later 38 & 39), (Old BBMP PID No.91-80-38/5), Now having New BBMP E.P.I.D No. 1332423718, Situated at Coles Road, Bangalore-560005, presently within the jurisdiction of BBMP Ward No.78 (Pulakeshinagar Ward), which is more fully described in the schedule herein below and referred as **"Schedule Property"** from **Mr.Giri Gopal** S/o Late H.M.Krishna Reddy.

Any person/s claiming to have any right, title or interest in and over the Schedule Property or any part thereof detailed below or has any objection to the proposed purchase of the Schedule Property, should lodge his or her claim or objections, if any, in writing, supported by authentic documentary evidence to the undersigned, **within Fifteen days** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, our client will proceed to conclude the purchase of the Schedule Property and any claims or objections lodged and received after the expiry of the above stipulated period will not be binding on our client in any manner.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ALL THAT the piece and parcel of Immovable **Property bearing New Municipal No.38/5,** (Old No.11), (later 38 & 39), (Old BBMP PID No.91-80-38/5), Presently having New BBMP E.P.I.D No.1332423718, Situated at **Coles Road, Bangalore-560005,** presently within BBMP Ward No.78, (Pulakeshinagar Ward) and measuring **East to West : on the Northern Side 73 ft and on the Southern Side 75 ft and North to South: on the Eastern Side 39 ft 9 inches** and **on the Western Side 38 ft and totally measuring 2882.3 Sq ft, (267.8 Sq mtr)** and the Schedule property consists of **old building with total built up area 3558 Sq feet (330.5 Sq Mtrs), with RCC roofing with mosaic flooring,** provided with amenities like electricity, water and sanitary connection and bounded on the:

East by : Private Property,
West by : Common Passage 25 feet Wide Road
North by : Property bearing No.38/4,
South by : Property bearing No.38/6
And other property.

PRECINCT LEGAL
No.43, TNT Tower, Unit No.S-2,
Infantry Road, Bangalore -560001
9448735360 / 7899943058
Place: Bangalore Date: 29.12.2025

PUBLIC NOTICE
(LOSS OF DOCUMENT)

My client **M.S.MUZZAMMIL AHMED, also known as MOHAMMED SYED AHMED MUZAMIL,** S/o.Late.Mr.Mohammed Ismail, Residing at # 16, 2nd Cross, Arokiyamma Layout, Venkateshpuram, Bangalore-560 045, who was the custodian of the Original Registered Rectification dated:03-03-2007 which is Registered as Document No.BLN-1-65757-2006-07 of 2006-07 of Book-I, Stored in CD No.BLND-390 by the Sub-Registrar, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore, which is a link document in respect of Residential Property Bearing Municipal Corporation **No.16**, 2nd Cross, Arogyamma Layout, Old BBMP Ward No.94 New BBMP Ward No.30, Bangalore, and the same has been lost and misplaced by my client while in transit at Tannery Road, Bangalore.

That the finder if any may please contact the undersigned who will be suitably rewarded for the same.

ABDUL LATEEF KHAN
M.A.,LL.B., **Advocate,**
No.16, 12th Cross, B.S.A. Road,
1st Stage, Pillanna Garden, B'lore-84.
M : 9845110533
Place : Bangalore Date : 29-12-2025

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, GANAPATI Ayyanavar, s/o; Prakash, r/o : No–306, 9th C Main, HRBR Layout, 1st Block, Kalyanagar, Blr –560043. Have changed my name as Ganapati Prakash Ayyanavar.

I, RAVINDRA, s/o; Mallappa Yangnoor, r/o: No.1,R K Paradise 1st MN, 2nd CRS, Dasappa Lyt, 3rd Blk, Ramamurthy Nagar, Blr –560016. Have changed my name as Ravindra Mallappa.

A twist in the tale: are scientists wrong about dark energy?

For proving that the expansion of the universe had speeded up, three scientists were awarded the 2011 physics Nobel Prize; a new study from Yonsei University has introduced a twist by suggesting that dark energy may actually be weakening, putting the brakes on the universe's acceleration

Prakash Chandra

All major discoveries in cosmology underline the maxim that the universe is not only stranger than we suppose but that it is stranger than we can suppose. The latest example of this is a study by researchers at the Yonsei University in South Korea that said the expansion of the universe is slowing down.

The study, published in *Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society* of November 6, is in sharp contrast to the standard model of the universe, called Lambda-Cold Dark Matter (LCDM), which speaks of an accelerating universe.

The Hubble space telescope's view of the galaxy in 2018. The type Ia supernova SN 2018gv is visible near the left edge. ESA/HUBBLE & NASA, A. RIESS AND SH0ES

Mysterious force

Accepted theory says the universe began about 13.8 billion years ago from a single, infinitely dense point that exploded cataclysmically in a 'Big Bang', leading to the formation of matter, energy, and space. As the explosion spread rapidly, it engendered subatomic particles such as protons, neutrons, and electrons before matter collapsed under gravity to form galaxies, stars and planets.

While the American astronomer Edwin Hubble confirmed that the universe was expanding in the 1920s, cosmologists conjectured that gravity must have also slowed down the expansion at some point.

This is why they were surprised when, in 1998, astronomers who were measuring the distances to faraway galaxies using the light from exploding stars called Type Ia supernovae concluded that 9 billion years after the universe began, its expansion actually gained momentum.

They figured the impetus came from a mysterious force known as 'dark energy', which makes up about 70% of the cosmos. In 1917, Albert Einstein had proposed that its effects can be represented in equations by the cosmological constant lambda Λ.

Dramatic twist

For proving that the expansion of the universe had indeed speeded up, three scientists – Saul Perlmutter, Brian Schmidt, and Adam Riess – were awarded the 2011 physics Nobel Prize. The trio and the teams they led had calculated the distances to Type Ia supernovae by using their apparent brightness as "standard candles" and measuring the redshift, i.e. the stretching of light due to the expansion of the universe.

This helped them determine the speeds at which different parts of the universe were receding from the earth.

Their data showed that the universe was accelerating as dark energy forced galaxies apart ever faster. An analogy astronomers often use to illustrate this is the way raisins in rising bread dough move away from each other. Thus, in the LCDM model of cosmology, gravity binds planets, stars, and galaxies together, while the anti-gravity properties of dark energy push galaxies further away from each other, driving the universe's expansion.

The Yonsei University study introduced a dramatic twist to this cosmic tale by suggesting that dark energy may actually be weakening, putting the brakes on the universe's acceleration.

"Our study shows that the universe has already entered a phase of decelerated expansion at the present epoch and that dark energy evolves with time much more rapidly than previously thought," Yonsei University astronomy professor Young-Wook Lee, who led the study, said.

The findings tie in with similar data from the Dark Energy Spectroscopic Instrument (DESI) in the USA: that Type Ia supernovae may not be the universe's "standard candles" after all, since their luminosity could be affected by the age of their parent stars.

If dark energy density is not constant in time, it flips conventional cosmological wisdom on its head, forcing scientists to look afresh at a universe that may be decelerating, and perhaps eventually contracting before collapsing in on itself in a 'Big Crunch'.

> The study result arises from a very particular way of slicing the data and from assumptions that aren't consistent with how supernova cosmology is done today
>
> **ADAM RIESS**
> JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

'Modify, not negate'

The study has already set off a fierce debate amongst cosmologists, with many doubting if there is enough evidence to revamp the LCDM any time soon, or if at all.

For instance, in an email to the author, University of Michigan cosmologist Dragan Huterer expressed doubts about dark energy evolving with time. "But this is really hard to evaluate as we do not have any compelling theoretical models for dark energy. So, from a theoretical point of view, it is not clear," Prof. Huterer added. "From the observational/experimental point of view, the statistical significance of the findings is strong, but not sufficiently strong to claim a discovery. We need to collect and analyse more data to be sure."

Brian Schmidt, distinguished professor of astronomy at the Australian National University and one of the three astrophysicists who won the Nobel Prize for their work on dark energy, is sceptical about the study's consequences for the LCDM.

"If validated, these findings would not negate the (standard) model of the cosmos, but would modify it," Prof. Schmidt wrote in an email. "Basically, instead of a constant [cosmological constant], we would have something that evolves over time."

He said he doesn't think that this would give rise to whole new subfields of astrophysics either.

"If true, it will give theorists a new set of clues to understand dark energy. I think it would be contained in the current theoretical cosmology community – and not (in) a new subfield."

Where is the jury?

Prof Huterer also said that "these developments would still continue in the realm of data-driven cosmology. And the fact that Type Ia supernovae have some new properties would inform the existing field of Type Ia supernovae astrophysics."

Adam Riess, professor of physics and astronomy at the Johns Hopkins University who shared the 2011 Nobel Prize, also said the Yonsei University study doesn't hold water.

"The study claims that Type Ia supernovae become systematically fainter with redshift because their progenitors evolve with cosmic time," he said.

"We show this is not supported by the data. Modern supernovae analyses already model and marginalise host-related systematics, like stellar mass and star-formation history, and when these are included, there is no significant evidence for luminosity evolution."

According to Prof. Riess, "the study result arises from a very particular way of slicing the data and from assumptions that aren't consistent with how supernova cosmology is done today."

When the Dark Energy Survey 5 Year dataset sample is analysed with standard methods, he continued, "the allowed level of evolution is an order of magnitude smaller than what their model predicts. In short: their proposed effect isn't seen in real data, and current analyses already guard against it."

Wherein lies the rub then? According to Prof. Riess, the new study makes a leap from host galaxy age to supernova age that is not physically justified.

This is something scientists have already tested and corrected for with much larger datasets.

"Present studies already correct for their claimed effect (age) because they correct for galaxy mass, and galaxy mass and age are directly correlated," he said.

Taken together, the jury is out on the Yonsei University study. Cosmologists are currently looking to state-of-the-art instruments such as the Vera Rubin Observatory in Chile and NASA's upcoming Nancy Grace Roman space telescope to throw light on dark energy's role in the fate of the universe – whether it will eventually slow down and end in a Big Crunch or continue to expand until it fades away into virtual nothingness.

(Prakash Chandra is a science writer. prakashisat@gmail.com)

Water guardian Oszkár Nagyapáti in Kiskunmajsa, Hungary. AP

How Central Europe's 'water guardians' are fighting desertification

Associated Press

Oszkár Nagyapáti climbed to the bottom of a sandy pit on his land on the Great Hungarian Plain and dug into the soil with his hand, looking for a sign of groundwater that in recent years has been in accelerating retreat.

"It's much worse, and it's getting worse year after year," he said as cloudy liquid slowly seeped into the hole. "Where did so much water go? It's unbelievable."

Nagyapáti has watched with distress as the region in southern Hungary, once an important site for agriculture, has become increasingly parched and dry. Where a variety of crops and grasses once filled the fields, today there are wide cracks in the soil and growing sand dunes more reminiscent of the Sahara Desert than Central Europe.

The region, known as the Homokhátság, has been described by some studies as semiarid, a distinction more common in parts of Africa, the American Southwest or Australian Outback, and is characterised by very little rain, dried-out wells and a water table plunging ever deeper underground.

Thermal spring water, cooled and purified, would flood a low-lying field, mimicking the natural cycle of flooding that channelising the rivers had ended

In a 2017 paper in *European Countryside*, researchers cited "the combined effect of climatic changes, improper land use and inappropriate environmental management" as causes for the Homokhátság's aridification.

Now a group of farmers and other volunteers, led by Nagyapáti, are trying to save the region and their lands from total desiccation using a resource for which Hungary is famous: thermal water.

Along with the group of volunteer "water guardians," he began negotiating with authorities and a local thermal spa last year, hoping to redirect the spa's overflow water, which would usually pour unused into a canal, onto their land. The thermal water is drawn from very deep underground.

According to the water guardians' plan, the water, cooled and purified, would be used to flood a 2.5-hectare low-lying field, a way of mimicking the natural cycle of flooding that channelizing the rivers had ended.

"When the flooding is complete and the water recedes, there will be 2.5 hectares of water surface in this area," Nagyapáti said. "This will be quite a shocking sight in our dry region."

A 2024 study by Hungary's Eötvös Loránd University showed that unusually dry layers of surface-level air in the region had prevented any arriving storm fronts from producing precipitation. Instead, the fronts would pass through without rain, and result in high winds that dried out the topsoil even further.

The water guardians hoped that by artificially flooding certain areas, they wouldn't only raise the groundwater level but also create a microclimate through surface evaporation that could increase humidity, reduce temperatures and dust and have a positive impact on nearby vegetation.

Tamás Tóth, a meteorologist in Hungary, said that because of the potential impact such wetlands can have on the surrounding climate, water retention is the "key issue in the coming years and for generations to come".

Following another hot, dry summer this year, the water guardians blocked a series of sluices along a canal, and the repurposed water from the spa began slowly gathering in the low-lying field. After a couple of months, the field had nearly been filled.

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Chemistry's foul fellows

Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

X is a colourless gas that smells like garlic or fish, especially when it contains impurities. Scientists have linked it to rotting organic matter in places with low oxygen. In 2020, researchers said they detected X in Venus's atmosphere, hinting at unusual chemistry, but later studies dismissed it. Name X.

QUESTION 2

Name the colourless gas notorious in high-school chemistry labs for smelling like rotten eggs. It's produced when bacteria break down one of its constituent elements in the absence of oxygen. It can also appear near sewage systems and volcanic vents and is toxic even at low concentrations.

QUESTION 3

_____ gas has a sharp 'electrical' smell that people sometimes notice after lightning storms or near some machines with sparking. It's a compound made of three atoms of the same element. The 1987 Montreal Protocol was created to help protect this gas's presence in the upper atmosphere. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 4

This element is a dark reddish-brown liquid at room temperature and gives off a strong and irritating vapour. It belongs to the family of halogens on the periodic table. People used to use it in the first photography techniques and also in some flame retardants. Name it.

QUESTION 5

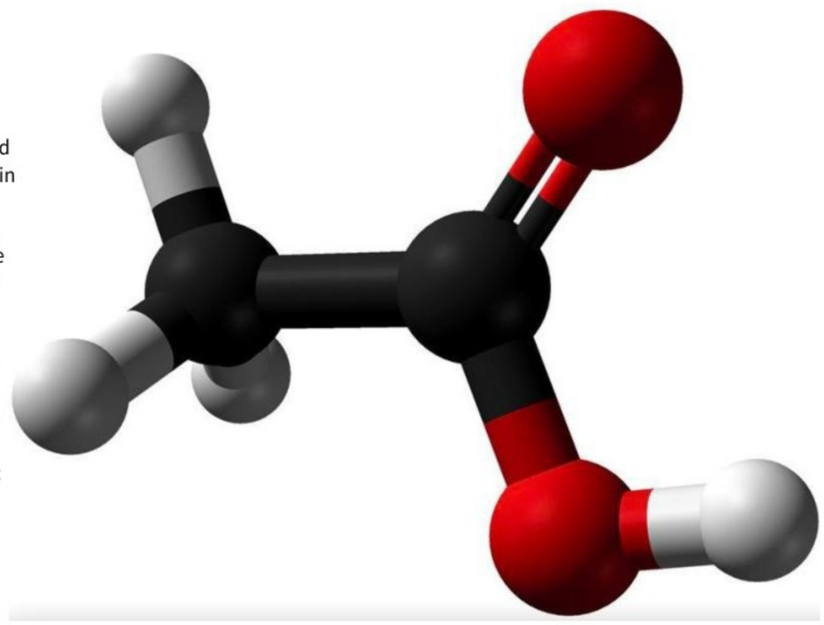
Y is a simple compound, in fact the smallest aldehyde, and it's widely used to preserve biological specimens and in some building materials. It has a strong, sharp archetypically chemical smell and can irritate the eyes and the throat, especially in poorly ventilated spaces. Name Y.

Answers to December 25 quiz:

1. Worked on falling bodies, inertia of motion – **Ans: Galileo Galilei**
2. Whose observations led to Kepler's laws – **Ans: Tycho Brahe**
3. Philosopher who advanced analytic geometry – **Ans: René Descartes**
4. Investigated mechanics of springs, etc. – **Ans: Robert Hooke**
5. Physicist who worked out timekeeping with pendulums – **Ans: Christiaan Huygens**

Visual: **Pierre de Fermat**

First contact: Tamal Biswas | K.N. Viswanathan | Aditya Tiwari | Mohammad Sohail | Anmol Agrawal



Visual: Name the molecule depicted by this ball-and-stick model. It's responsible for vinegar's odour and imparts its sour taste. PUBLIC DOMAIN

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Vasanth Price ₹36990

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

International travellers to be affected by China's drills

1 In lakh. China's military dispatched air, navy and rocket troops to conduct military drills around Taiwan, a move Beijing called a "stern warning" against separatist and "external interference" forces. Taiwan called Chinese government "the biggest destroyer of peace." PTI

Jute acreage during the Kharif season as of late September

5.56 In lakh hectares. The jute industry went through another year of crisis with a sharp raw material shortage, record-high prices and a growing dependence on plastic bags for food grain packaging, unsettling the sector. PTI

Number of drones flown by Cambodia over Thailand

250 Thailand's army on Monday accused Cambodia of violating a newly signed ceasefire agreement, reached after weeks of deadly border clashes, by flying more than 250 drones over its territory. AFP

Percentage increase in India's export to Australia in 2024-25

8 in per cent. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday that from January 1 next year, 100% Australian product categories will be duty-free for Indian exports. He also said India's exports to Australia rose 8% in 2024-25. PTI

Amount pledged by U.S. in humanitarian support to the UN

2 in $ billion. The United States has made a $2 billion pledge for UN humanitarian aid, a U.S. State Department official said on Monday, following major foreign aid cuts by the Trump administration in 2025. REUTERS

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Why is Myanmar voting amid conflict?

Why is the Tatmadaw pushing ahead with elections despite instability? Which major parties are absent from the contest, and why? How does the electoral system favour the military's dominance? What has been the international response to the elections?

EXPLAINER

Sanjay Pulipaka

The story so far:
After the February 2021 coup, the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) promised to hold elections and restore civilian governance quickly. Even after four years and 10 months, the Tatmadaw has not established stable political conditions. And yet, it is conducting three-phase elections for the Union Parliament and provincial legislatures. The first phase was held on December 28, while the second and third phases are scheduled for January 11 and January 25 next year.

What is the context in which the elections are being held?
The elections are taking place in a highly stressed political context. After the coup, the civilian leadership, despite a massive electoral victory in the 2020 elections, is under detention, which includes State Counsellor and Chairperson of the National League for Democracy (NLD) Aung San Suu Kyi, leaders from various political parties, and democracy activists. The Tatmadaw also reconstituted the Union Election Commission (UEC) with personnel favourably disposed towards it.

The coup prompted an armed resistance movement led by the People's Defence Forces and Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs). Despite deploying harsh military tactics, including against the civilian population, the Tatmadaw has lost control of large parts of the country. For instance, in Rakhine province, the Arakan Army controls large areas, whereas the Tatmadaw holds urban centres such as the Sittwe port.

According to the UEC, elections will not be conducted in nine parliamentary constituencies of the Pyithu Hluttaw (lower house), two parliamentary constituencies of the Amyotha Hluttaw (upper house), and nine constituencies of the Region/State Hluttaw (provincial legislatures) due to the prevailing security situation. It should be noted that even in constituencies where the Tatmadaw claims to organise elections, large tracts of rural areas are not witnessing polling.

Even in areas where the military's writ runs, it is resorting to coercive tactics to quell criticism of the elections. Approximately 229 people were arrested under the Election Protection Law, enacted in July 2025. Unlike previous elections, the Tatmadaw is using electronic voting machines. Given the history of blatant tampering with the electoral process, the use of machine-based voting will not inspire much confidence.

Due to political instability and the consequent economic hardships, large numbers of people have migrated out of Myanmar. Specifically, many young people have fled the country to avoid conscription. Given that the election outcomes are perceived to be predetermined, there is little incentive for migrants to return to participate in the electoral process. Not surprisingly, voter turnout in the first phase of the election was very low.

Which parties are contesting the elections?
According to the UEC, six national parties and 51 provincial parties are registered to contest the elections. With its leadership under prolonged detention and its refusal to register under the new, stringent Political Parties Registration Law, the NLD, the largest party, was dissolved by the UEC.

In addition to the NLD, other parties with a strong regional presence are also not contesting the elections. For instance, in Rakhine province, where the Tatmadaw's ability to organise elections is minimal, the Arakan National Party's (ANP) application for re-registration was rejected by the UEC. A similar fate also befell the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) and a few other parties. With the deregistration of large national and regional parties, military-supported parties such as the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) have no genuine competitors.

Furthermore, resource constraints are unlikely to allow other parties to contest a large number of seats. Only the USDP has the wherewithal to contest the largest number of seats, and it is likely to emerge as the largest party. Even prior to the election, it is estimated that the USDP is winning more than two dozen parliamentary constituencies uncontested. Early reports from the first phase also hint at USDP wins.

There are other parties, such as the National Unity Party (NUP), which also receive support from the military. Given that the military has 25% of the seats in the legislature and military-dominated parties will also have a stronger presence, the Tatmadaw will be in complete control of the legislative agenda.

How does the electoral system and reform agenda shape the outcome?
The current elections are being held under a first-past-the-post (FPTP) and proportional representation (PR) systems. The lower house will elect representatives under the FPTP system. On the other hand, the upper house and State legislatures will elect representatives under PR as well as under the FPTP.

The Tatmadaw deployed a proportional representation system to ensure that no party secures a significant majority of elected seats in both houses of Parliament, as the NLD did in 2015 and 2020. A fragmented verdict will make constitutional reform difficult, as no single party will have sufficient numbers, and 25% of legislative seats are reserved for the military.

Some argue that the 2025-26 general elections may herald a reform process similar to that following the 2010 elections. Post the 2010 polls, President Thein Sein, a former military general in civilian clothes, introduced significant political and governance reforms. However, the current military leadership perceives that these reforms laid the foundation for the NLD's landslide victories in 2015 and 2020. Therefore, it is unlikely that the military will countenance the rise of another reformist military general. Furthermore, many contend that Mr. Thein Sein's reforms were calibrated and never intended to undermine the military's dominance within the governance structure.

How has the international community responded?
These elections are neither aimed at reforming the political process nor at ascertaining the will of the people. Instead, they represent a desperate attempt to secure legitimacy for the Tatmadaw in both domestic and international politics. ASEAN has refused to allow Myanmar military leaders to represent their country at its summit meetings. Consequently, the Tatmadaw deputed civilian leaders to these meetings. The military leaders hope that the formation of a government led by personnel in civilian clothing after the elections may help overcome such diplomatic embarrassments.

However, the elections have elicited criticism from some members of the international community. The spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated that the elections may contribute to further polarisation throughout the country. Japan has expressed concern that holding elections without releasing political prisoners could aggravate the situation. Australia and the European Union noted that the elections cannot be termed as free, fair, and inclusive.

On the other hand, China and Russia, which have strong relations with the Tatmadaw, have dispatched election observers to Myanmar.

While the United States has always called for democracy in Myanmar, there are concerns that President Donald Trump may dilute such an approach. A few months ago, the U.S. Treasury Department lifted sanctions on firms and individuals perceived to be close to the Tatmadaw leadership. Despite U.S. authorities noting that the removal constituted the 'ordinary course of business,' many Myanmar observers expressed disappointment. There is an apprehension that President Trump may be prioritising access to rare earth minerals in Myanmar.

What lies ahead?
If Myanmar is to experience peace and prosperity, it would require a genuine democratic framework, which is informed by principles of federalism and decentralisation. However, such a political project would require resolving ethnic conflict and carefully navigating contemporary geopolitics.

Sanjay Pulipaka is the Chairperson of the Politeia Research Foundation. The views expressed here are personal.

Under control: Voters line up to cast their ballots at a polling station in Naypyidaw, Myanmar, on December 28. AP

The status of a few major parties

	Seats won in 2020 elections (lower house)	Status in 2025 elections
National League for Democracy (NLD)	258	Deregistered
Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP)	26	Contesting
Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD)	13	Deregistered
Arakan National Party (ANP)	4	Deregistered
Ta'ang National Party (TNP)	3	Deregistered
Pa-O National Organisation (PNO)	3	Contesting
Kayah State Democratic Party (KySDP)	2	Deregistered

THE GIST

Despite failing to establish stable political conditions after the February 2021 coup, the Tatmadaw is pressing ahead with a three-phase election.

Major national and regional parties, including the NLD, have been dissolved or excluded, while military-supported parties face no genuine competition, ensuring that the Tatmadaw retains firm control over the legislative agenda.

The elections are widely viewed as an attempt to secure domestic and international legitimacy rather than to ascertain the will of the people, drawing criticism from the UN, Japan, Australia, and the EU, even as China and Russia engage with the process.

Kogilu demolition: Displaced families caught between conflicting surveys

The surveys have been conducted by an NGO, by Housing Corporation, and by local leaders have shown different figures

Rishita Khanna
BENGALURU

While families claiming to have lived in Kogilu Layout for years without homes, nine days after the demolition, they now find themselves caught between conflicting surveys conducted by multiple agencies and organisations.

An independent survey conducted by an NGO, which has worked with residents in the area for several years, identified nearly 170 families residing in Fakeer Colony and Waseem Layout before the demolitions on December 20. The survey recorded 167 demolished houses - 47 in Fakeer Colony, 38 in Fakeer Colony (New), and 82 in Waseem Layout, affecting 192 heads of families.

On the other hand, officials of the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation Limited, who visited the site on December 28, conducted their survey and placed the number of affected families at close to 200. However, *The Hindu* has learnt that yet another separate list submitted to the government agencies by "slum leaders" claiming to represent the settlements projected the number of eligible families at over 350. Sources said officials raised concerns over discrepancies in figures, but this list has not been taken on record.

A view of the demolition site at Kogilu Layout in Bengaluru. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Payments to leaders

The residents also acknowledged that several families had paid around ₹2 lakh over the years to local intermediaries to secure plots and basic services, and said they were later warned not to speak about these payments after the demolition. "We paid ₹2.08 lakh to one person here. He arranged the electricity meter box and told us everything was legal. Since 2012, we have been staying here.

Residents have acknowledged that several families had paid around ₹2 lakh over the years to local intermediaries to secure plots and basic service

After the demolition, he threatened us and said we should not reveal anything because we are not literate. Now we have lost everything, and we don't even know if our names are included in any survey," a resident said.

Many families also said documents required to establish eligibility were destroyed during the demolition.

Dy CM visit

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who visited the demolition site after nine days, said the government was identifying poor and deserving families affected by the clearance. "Some people have taken ₹1 lakh, even ₹2 lakh, from families and allowed them to illegally build huts on government land. We will not allow sudden slum creation in Bengaluru," he said.

When asked who had collected money from residents, Mr. Shivakumar said, "Our investigation team will verify this," he said. He added that the government had documents showing agreements for the construction on the government land and said action would be taken against those responsible.

Who is accountable?

The displaced families, however, questioned why such transactions spanning several years were not acted upon earlier, and how accountability would now be fixed when families who paid intermediaries have lost both homes and documents. They also said verification based largely on Aadhaar details could exclude families whose papers were destroyed during the demolition.

Responding to concerns raised by the residents that many had lost key documents, which are primarily used for verification, a senior official the housing corporation said alternative documents, including EPIC cards and ration cards, would be considered, and verification would be carried out accordingly.

Joint survey today

A senior official also acknowledged that the survey conducted by the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Committee showed figures that differed from those arrived at by the GBA and the Revenue Department and said that the officials from all three departments will jointly carry out a fresh survey on Tuesday to arrive at a final count.

Satellite imagery shows habitations appeared in 2019, but residents deny claim

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amid disputes over the period of habitation at Fakeer Colony following the demolition, conflicting claims by residents and government agencies have brought the attention to when the settlements first came up, a factor that is key to rehabilitation and eligibility for housing.

While the residents claimed they had been living in the area for 15 to 20 years, authorities maintained that the habitations were recent encroachments on government land.

On Monday, Bangalore Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML), which carried out the demolition, released satellite imagery from 2016 to 2025 to support its claim. According to the BSWML, the images show that structures near the Azaan Masjid area began appearing only around 2019 and expanded gradually in the following years. The agency said this pointed out to expanding encroachment rather than long-established habitation. The residents disputed the claims, stating that satellite imagery does not adequately capture the evolution of informal settlements. They said initial shelters were often temporary in nature and may not be visible in aerial images. What appears as expansion after 2019 could reflect the gradual replacement of older dwellings rather than new encroachments, they argued. To support their claims, the residents produced electricity bills, saying power connections had been provided years earlier.

They also argued that access to basic services indicated the presence of habitation before the period reflected in the satellite imagery. Families also said identity documents, ration cards and Aadhaar-linked addresses showed longer residence in the area than what was claimed by the government agencies. Meanwhile, on Monday, a team from the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission visited the site.

Man killed in cylinder blast, three injured

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A business analyst was killed and three others were injured in a gas cylinder explosion at a co-living paying guest accommodation in Kundalahalli on Monday.

The deceased has been identified as Aravind, 23. The injured have been identified as Venkatesh, 28, a PG employee, C.V. Goel, 23, and Vishal Verma, 23. The incident occurred at Seven Hills Sai Co-Living PG.

Around 6.15 p.m., Aravind noticed smoke emanating from the kitchen and went downstairs to check. At that moment, a commercial gas cylinder exploded due to a suspected leakage. Aravind died on the spot, while three others suffered burn injuries, the police said. A case has been registered at the HAL police station.

Reverence

An elderly man paying his respects to renowned Kannada poet Kuppalli Venkatappa Puttappa, famously known as Kuvempu, on the occasion of his 121st birth anniversary at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday. ALLEN EGENUSE J.

Prof. Thelma chosen as Coorg person of the year

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

B.K. Thelma, who led the first genetic study of Kodavas, has been chosen as 'Coorg Person of the Year 2025', by a news and tourism portal called coorgtourisminfo.com.

"Carrying out a systematic sampling of the Kodavas from across Kodagu, using the available genetic analytical tools, Prof. Thelma and her team have been successful in publishing a scientific paper on the genetic makeup of Kodavas," a statement from the portal said.

TV artist found dead in PG room in Kengeri

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 26-year-old TV actress was found dead allegedly by suicide in her paying guest (PG) accommodation at Kengeri in the early hours of Monday.

The deceased has been identified as C.M. Nandini (26), daughter of G.R. Basavarajeshwari, a government school teacher residing in Kotturu taluk of Vijayanagara district.

According to the complainant, Nandini had completed PUC in Ballari in 2018 and later joined an engineering course at an institute in Hesaraghatta, Bengaluru. However, she discontinued her studies after developing a keen interest in acting. She subsequently underwent acting training in Rajarajeshwari Nagar and worked in various Kannada television serials from 2019 while staying in PG accommodations in the city.

Nandini's father, S. Mahabaleshwar, a government lower primary school teacher, passed away in 2021 due to illness. Following his death, Nandini was offered a government job on compassionate grounds in 2023. However, she reportedly refused to take up the job, insisting on pursuing a career in acting, leading to disagreements at home. In August 2025, Nandini shifted to a PG at Mylasandra, Kengeri, where she was residing alone. The police said that on Sunday, Nandini visited the house of her friend Puneeth in the evening and returned to her PG around 11.20 p.m., after which she locked herself inside her room. When repeated phone calls from Puneeth went unanswered, he alerted the PG manager Kumar and in-charge Kiran around 11.50 p.m.

The PG staff, along with other residents, attempted to communicate with her but received no response. On forcibly opening the door, they found Nandini dead. Kiran immediately alerted the police. The Kengeri police reached the spot and confirmed that Nandini had died by suicide at the scene.

In her complaint, the mother stated that Nandini had written in her diary expressing her unwillingness to take up a government job and her distress over not being understood by her family regarding her passion for acting. The complainant stated that she has no suspicion or allegations against anyone in connection with her daughter's death. A case of unnatural death has been registered at the Kengeri Police Station.

(Those having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahaya vani ph. 104 for help)

IDs of delivery executives blocked by aggregator companies after they take part in strike

Shilpa Elizabeth
BENGALURU

Around 20 delivery executives from Bengaluru who work with online food delivery platforms have alleged that their IDs have been blocked by the aggregator companies after they participated in a nationwide strike on December 25.

Screenshots of a conversation between a delivery executive and what appeared to be the support team of a food delivery platform showed that the worker's ID was terminated for being a "strike enabler".

"We would like to inform you that you cannot go online due to strike enabler reason, and we are unable to activate your ID," read that chat, which *The Hindu* has seen.

The recently introduced Karnataka Platform-Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act specifies that an aggregator or the platform shall not terminate or deactivate a gig worker without giving valid reasons in writing and prior notice of 14 days.

The recently introduced Karnataka Platform-Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act specifies that an aggregator or the platform shall not terminate or deactivate a gig worker without giving valid reasons in writing and prior notice of 14 days.
PHOTO FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE

Mahboob Pasha, a delivery executive, was one among those who found their IDs blocked after the protest that called for the withdrawal of 10-minute delivery models, transparent wage structures and incentives, mandatory rest breaks, reasonable working hours, and end to arbitrary ID-blocking.

"On December 25, we held a strike near Sarjapur to oppose such exploitative practices of aggregator companies. Now, the IDs of around 20 members, including mine, have been blocked," Mr. Pasha said, adding that he had raised a ticket with the company only to be told that the ID was blocked for participating in the strike.

Payment on hold

Mr. Pasha claimed that his weekly payout, which would amount to ₹5,000, has been on hold.

"On the day of the strike, following police complaints filed by managers of aggregator companies, we were taken to the police station and held there for about six hours. Only after the union representatives came did they let us go. Since then, many of us have been getting calls, some of them claiming to be from police stations, threatening us to stay away from such activities," he alleged.

Violation of the Act

The Karnataka App-Based Workers' Union representatives submitted a letter regarding the ID-blocking to Labour Department officials.

The letter pointed out that the ID-blocking goes against the rights guaranteed under the Indian Constitution and is illegal under the Karnataka Platform-Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act.

"We bring to your attention the screenshots (attached) which show a Zomato worker's ID being deactivated, explicitly stating that this deactivation is for 'strike enabler reasons.' In addition, many gig workers have faced other forms of retaliation and threats for participating in any sort of collective action," the letter stated. According to union leaders, on December 25, nearly 40,000 delivery workers across India participated in the strike. One more strike is planned to be held on December 31.

Karnataka App-Based Workers' Union president Mohammad Inayat Ali alleged that aggregator companies are resorting to intimidation tactics to scare workers away from asking for their basic rights.

"Instead of addressing the demands of the workers, the companies tried to break the strike by using third-party delivery agencies, extra incentive bribes, and other means. We will not accept unsafe '10-minute delivery' models, arbitrary ID blocking, or denial of dignity and social security," Mr. Ali said.

The Labour Department officials said that the matter has come to their notice and would be looking into. *The Hindu* reached out to prominent food delivery platforms regarding the issue, but has not recieved a response.

Timings
BENGALURU

TUESDAY, DEC. 30		
RISE	06:41	SET 18:03
RISE	13:59	SET 02:07
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 31		
RISE	06:41	SET 18:04
RISE	14:53	SET 03:09
THURSDAY, JAN. 01		
RISE	06:42	SET 18:05
RISE	15:53	SET 04:15

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	29	20
Mysuru	28	13
Bengaluru	26	16

Bengaluru Today
27°C The weather will be dry. Day will be comfortable. Night will be cool and hazy.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
26°C Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be comfortable. Night also will be cool. Dry weather to occur.

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THE HINDU
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5	Sr. Executives- Investment Promotion	2
6	Executive- Investment Promotion	2
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EXPLAINER

What is the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement?

What zero-duty access will India get, and how much FDI is New Zealand committing to by 2030? Which sectors in New Zealand have criticised the deal? Why is India accelerating FTAs with countries? How will labour-intensive sectors like textiles, leather, gems, and processed foods benefit?

Saee Pande

The story so far:
The recent India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was concluded in December, under which New Zealand will levy zero duty on 100% of India's exports and bring in $20 billion in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by 2030.

What are the key bargains?
India will receive zero-duty market access for all its exports to New Zealand. In return, India will relax tariffs on 95% of imports from New Zealand, with 57% of these products becoming duty-free from day one.

New Zealand has committed to investing $20 billion in India over the next 15 years, with firm clawback mechanisms in case the investment doesn't meet the stipulated timeline. The FDI is aimed at promoting skill mobility and services, creating employment and growth opportunities across 118 sectors. For the first time, New Zealand has agreed to facilitate trade in Ayurveda, yoga, and traditional medicine services with India.

The deal also makes provisions for the support and mobility of Indian skilled workers. Youth, students, and professionals will find it easier to live and work in New Zealand.

The FTA creates opportunities for India to become a key supplier of skilled workforce in services such as IT professionals, Engineers, Yoga instructors, Indian chefs, Music teachers, as well as in sectors including healthcare, education, and construction.

Student mobility, work permits of up to 20 hours per week while studying, and extended post-study work visas are some of the opportunities for Indian youth to get global exposure.

The agreement also builds on MSMEs and employment opportunities through labour-intensive sectors, including textiles and apparel, leather and footwear, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, and processed food items.

Which sectors has India kept outside the agreement?
India has refused to give market access to major items crucial to New Zealand, such as dairy and agricultural products, including milk, cheese, cream, butter, yogurt, onions, sugar, edible oils, spices, and rubber, in order to protect Indian farmers and small and medium industries.

New Zealand will develop focused action plans to develop and improve productivity, quality, and sectoral capabilities for fruit growers in India, particularly for exotic fruits like kiwifruit, apples, and honey. This cooperation will ensure the establishment of centres of excellence, improved planting material, capacity building for growers, technical support for orchard management, post-harvest practices, supply chains, and food safety.

Why is the FTA important?
More than a breakthrough, the India-New Zealand FTA is a framework for deeper cooperation in the future. It is India's conscious move to increase its global economic footprint. Trade diversification demands a deep and deliberate transformation of the country's productive sector and integration into global value chains.

Strong ties: Prime Minister of New Zealand, Christopher Luxon and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 17. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

The India-New Zealand FTA is hailed for being the fastest concluded, completed in a record time of nine months after being announced in March 2025. It enhances market access and tariff preferences for Indian exports to New Zealand, while proving to be a gateway to Oceania and Pacific Island markets. Standing at $49,380, New Zealand is among the higher-income economies in Oceania.

The Indian diaspora in New Zealand constitutes 5% of its population, which amounts to 3,00,000 persons. This creates a promising exchange and opens opportunities for soft power politics between the two nations.

Currently, India's bilateral merchandise trade with New Zealand stands at $1.3 billion. The deal aims to double this figure over the next five years.

India has instated strict safeguards to protect its sensitive sectors, like agriculture and dairy, from one of the world's largest dairy exporters.

This is also one of the first FTAs negotiated and concluded entirely by a women-led and women-driven team, from the chief negotiating officer to the ambassador to New Zealand.

Why is India accelerating new FTAs?
By engaging with the Pacific, West Asia, and Africa as trade partners, India is leveraging its position and promoting realignments through bilateral engagements and FTAs.

FTAs provide a platform to pursue unique and region-specific commitments, creating room for WTO-plus commitments, especially in areas like services, digital trade, and investment. Diversification of trade partners means that India doesn't have to be dependent on traditional markets such as the EU, the U.S., and China.

FTAs are aligned with India's development goals and policies, such as Make in India, and securing India's sensitive sectors through technology transfers and production-induced incentive schemes that can help in aligning Indian manufacturing with the global value chains.

India is currently determined to materialise FTAs with several countries, including Russia, Oman, the U.K., and New Zealand, in spite of its not-so-successful past FTA engagements. This points to India's attempt at securing strategic and geopolitical alliances via economic and trade liberalisation.

This is India's third FTA this year, after agreements with the U.K. and Oman. It is a part of a broad strategy that India is determined to take forward after the U.S. imposed steep tariffs. A large chunk of India's trade is U.S.-dependent. The bilateral trade between India and the U.S. stands at $132 billion, and changes in the tariffs by the U.S. really hurt India's trade.

India's exports to the U.S. declined sharply in September and October, dropping to 12% and 8.5%, respectively. The Indo-U.S. free trade deal is in slow progress, and 50% of the tariffs still remain unchanged. This has resulted in a departure from the U.S. and into an urgent need for diversification of India's trade policies and strategic alliances in order to attract greener trade pastures.

One of the main reasons for the stalling of the Indo-U.S. bilateral talks is India's steadfast policy of not opening up its farming and dairy sector to concessions in the FTA. India is thus making a substantial move from short-term economic partnerships to long-term trade alliances.

The India-New Zealand deal builds a structure that is more investor-friendly. India is willing to let go of its protectionist image by lowering trade barriers, promoting ease of business, and opening its markets. India's FTAs today go well beyond tariff reduction; they are more of a framework for future cooperation and economic alignment.

What criticisms does the agreement face?
This is New Zealand's first FTA that excludes dairy and agriculture from its purview, due to which it is heavily criticised in New Zealand by coalition partners of the current government. The Foreign Minister of New Zealand said that the deal is 'neither free nor fair' as it bypasses the dairy and agriculture sector, the country's largest industry, and added that they will vote against the bill when it comes to the floor in the New Zealand Parliament in 2026. India, on the other hand, assumes an easy passage to legislation.

In India, FTAs are criticised for widening trade deficits and generating asymmetric gains, as it has led to imports from partner countries growing faster than our exports. Although the safeguards established by the current India-New Zealand FTA claim to cover these risks and protect and promote India's sensitive sectors through manufacturing collaboration. The success of which will have to be determined as the implementation unfolds over the years.

What is the way forward?
Even though the India-New Zealand FTA is considered historic, it is important to learn from the trade agreements in the past, as many resulted in low yields.

India needs to invest in domestic competitiveness, meet global market standards and quality requirements, ensure strong rules of origin, define anti-dumping provisions, strengthen its sensitive sector and MSMEs and formulate them in line with global markets.

India also needs to invest in research and development for increasing quality and competitiveness of its products if it has to thrive in the global market.

Saee Pande is a freelance writer with a focus on politics, current affairs, international relations, and geopolitics

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

I don't find the word 'dude' in the dictionary. What does it mean? (A. Sivaji, Malkajgiri, Hyderabad).
The word dude is not found in many dictionaries because it is considered slang. The word is often used to address one's male friends. For example, it is common to hear teenagers in the United States greet each other in the following manner. "Hey dude! What's up?". or "How is it going dude?". It can be used to refer to any man. Remember, the word 'dude' is considered slang, so do not use it on formal occasions.

Not everyone likes to be called a dude! Slang dictionaries list 'dudette' as the female of 'dude'. For example, Kalavathi is a female dudette. Dictionaries list this word, but I haven't heard anyone actually use the word 'dudette'.

What is the origin of the expression of 'to up the ante'? (K. N. Nair, Alwaye, Kerala)
This is an informal expression which is used quite a bit in gambling. When you up/raise the ante, you increase the stakes. It is common for people to play cards for money. In a card game like poker, a player puts money into a pot even before he has been dealt the cards. This amount of money which he contributes is called the 'ante'. When a player decides to 'up the ante', he puts more money into the pot; thereby increasing the stakes. The word 'ante' is from Latin meaning 'before'. The person puts in the money before he receives the cards, remember! Here are a few examples. When Ramdas joined the game, he upped the ante to Rs. 50,000. My friend wanted to up the ante, but I said nothing doing.

This expression is also used in contexts other than gambling as well. If you up the ante when you are involved in a dispute with someone, you usually increase the stakes.

By the way, the 'ante' in 'ante' is pronounced like the word 'ant'. The 'e' in the second syllable is pronounced like the 'i' in words like 'bit', 'hit' and 'fit'. The stress is on the first syllable.

What is the meaning of 'hype'? (Uma Devi Ramaswamy, Cochin, Kerala)
The word 'hype' rhymes with the words 'type', 'ripe' and 'pipe'. It has several different meanings. One of the meanings of the word 'hype' is to promote a product aggressively. There is a lot of hype nowadays whenever a new cola is launched. After all, image is everything, isn't it?

The word 'hype' also means to overpraise or give importance to someone or something. In other words, you try and make an event or a person seem better or more important than what he is.

What is the meaning of 'glitch'? (L. A. Ramanan, Palakkad, Kerala)
The word 'glitch', which rhymes with 'switch' and 'pitch' is usually defined as a small or minor fault in the working of something. The fault though minor, usually causes a lot of irritation. For example, the computer has developed a glitch. I would like you to look into it. We expected a few glitches, but everything went smoothly.

Published in The Hindu on February 16, 1999

Word of the day

Terse:
Brief and to the point

Synonyms: short, concise, crisp

Usage: *He gave a terse answer and walked away.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/tersepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /tɜːs/

THE DAILY QUIZ

Can you identify the locations based on the news events that unfolded in 2025?

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Mohammed Hidhayat

QUESTION 1
Where did the summit between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin take place?

QUESTION 2
The Prime Minister of this Western European country resigned after less than a month in office, only to be reinstated.

QUESTION 3
The Preah Vihear Temple remains a point of contention between which two Southeast Asian countries

QUESTION 4
Where did the mass shooting attack on tourists occur that led to a military escalation between India and Pakistan?

QUESTION 5
Which African city hosted this year's G-20 Summit?

QUESTION 6
Which country enforced the world's first social media ban for children under 16?

QUESTION 7
Where was the year's deadliest earthquake recorded?

QUESTION 8
The United Nations Security Council supported an autonomy plan for the disputed Western Sahara territory under the sovereignty of which country?

QUESTION 9
The 2025 Nobel Peace Prize winner was from this South American country.

QUESTION 10
This sparsely populated Arctic region was referenced in global discourse after a major power assigned it a special envoy.

Visual Question:
This narrow water body bordering the Arabian Peninsula appeared frequently in the news this year in connection with drone and missile attacks on commercial shipping. Can you name the strait? WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. Between which two big nations is Mongolia located? **Ans: Russia and China**
2. What is the 'Morin Khuur'? **Ans: It is a musical instrument with a horse's head that is traditionally carved into the top of the pegbox and featuring two strings**
3. Name the Capital of Mongolia and its meaning. **Ans: Ulaanbaatar, Red Hero**
4. How does one better know the famous warrior Temujin? **Ans: Genghis Khan**
5. What is the name of the traditional fermented mare's milk drink? **Ans: Airag**
6. Mazaalai's common name comes from a big feature. **Ans: Gobi Bear**
7. What do a 'deel' and a 'ger' mean to a Mongolian? **Ans: Deel is a traditional dress, while ger is a portable, round tent**
Visual: What is the symbol on the Mongolian National Flag called? **Ans: Soyombo**
Early Birds: K.N. Viswanathan | Arun Kumar Singh | Haridas Pal | Pranab Biswas | Sakshi Gupta

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Mysuru commuters oppose use of ageing BMTC buses; cite pollution issues

Seats were tattered and several buses emitted thick smoke; most of these are old BS-III buses, and the pollution is evident, a resident says

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

About 267 BMTC buses are currently being operated on various city routes by the KSRTC.

Bus commuters in Mysuru have voiced strong opposition to the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation's (KSRTC) decision to deploy ageing buses previously operated by the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) for city services, alleging that several of them are in poor condition and contribute to air pollution.

Residents said, "Many of the buses plying city routes are visibly old, uncomfortable, and inadequately maintained." "These buses are in very bad condition and not up to the mark. Some of them still carry the BMTC logo and have not even been repainted," Amogh A., a Mysuru resident, told *The Hindu*.

He added that seats were tattered and that several buses emitted thick smoke. "Most of these are old BS-III buses, and the pollution is evident," he alleged.

Another commuter, Sarthak K.M., alleged discrimination against small cities and towns. "It is unfair that used BMTC buses are sent here. Mysuru is a developed city and needs a good number of new buses. While Bengaluru is getting new buses, including electric buses that are environment-friendly, Mysuru is being given old, polluting vehicles," he said.

An RTI reply accessed by *The Hindu* revealed that about 267 BMTC buses are currently being operated on various city routes by the KSRTC across the State. According to the RTI filed by Yathish Kumar S., a Mysuru resident, KSRTC, which runs city bus services in several towns across Karnataka, received 267 buses from the BMTC and

> Some of them still carry the BMTC logo and have not even been repainted
>
> **AMOGH A.**
> A resident of Mysuru

deployed them across multiple depots under its jurisdiction. However, a senior official said that buses once operated by the BMTC were being reintroduced in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities after undergoing extensive refurbishment. The initiative, the official said, aims to bridge gaps in public transport while minimising costs through sustainable fleet management.

According to the corporation, each bus undergoes a comprehensive overhaul that includes engine refurbishment, new seat covers, replacement of window panels, and a complete revamp of the bus body. "Before re-entering service, all refurbished buses are rigorously inspected and must receive fitness certificates from the Regional Transport Offices," the official said. The KSRTC officials said that around 1,520 buses had been refurbished so far at the corporation's regional and divisional workshops across the State, adding that the refurbishment programme had won several awards for innovation and sustainability. Responding specifically to concerns in Mysuru, Akram Pasha, Managing Director of KSRTC, told *The Hindu* that only 25 buses formerly operated by the BMTC were currently deployed for city services in Mysuru.

"These buses have undergone complete overhauling before being pressed into service. There are no issues with their fitness or safety," he said, while assuring that services were being monitored regularly.

'I will continue to strengthen the party despite my old age'

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Former Prime Minister and Janata Dal (Secular) supremo H.D. Deve Gowda has reiterated that he will continue to strengthen the party despite his old age. "We will hold a much bigger rally in Hassan than what the ruling Congress did," he said.

Speaking to pressperson at Haradanahalli in Holenarasipur taluk, his native place, on Monday, Mr. Gowda said he will fight for the party until his last breath. "The Congress held rallies twice in Hassan in the last two years. Why are they so keen on Hassan?" he questioned, adding, "The Congress did all tricks to tarnish the image of Revanna. However, they did not succeed. His contributions to Hassan are significant and we will release a list of development works he initiated in Hassan at the right time." Commenting on the status of the Congress in the country, the former Prime Minister said that the party holds power only in three States. "However, the BJP holds power in 14 States. We are with the NDA," he stated. Mr. Gowda offered his prayers at the Deveshwara Temple in the village. His son, H.D. Revanna, and other family members accompanied him.

Workers' meeting

Later, Mr. Gowda held a meeting with party workers in Hassan. He told them that his party, a regional party, had remained strong in the State because of the people's support. "The people of Hassan have played a prominent role in my political career, which began in 1962. Party workers and people in the district have prayed for my health," the JD(S) leader said.

Mr. Gowda said that the party will hold a rally in Hassan on January 24, 2026, and more than two lakh people are expected to attend it.

Bengaluru start-up uses IoT and AI to help factories reduce water use by up to 30%

Rishita Khanna
BENGALURU

The system uses Internet of Things sensors to continuously track flow, pressure and water quality

As Bengaluru continues to grapple with uneven water availability and rising dependence on private supply, the Bengaluru-based start-up, FluxGen, has developed a system that promises industries real-time visibility into how water moves through their plants from extraction to discharge.

FluxGen, which was incubated at the NSRCEL, the start-up incubation centre at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB), built the platform, AquaGen, which stitches together measurements from meters, Supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) screens, lab reports and manual logs and feeds them into an analytics engine.

Objective

The company said, "The aim is to turn fragmented, disconnected data into a single, actionable picture so plant managers can spot leaks, avoid wastage and meet regulatory reporting requirements.

Bhargavpratim Roy, Growth Manager (Product and Growth), AquaGen, traces the idea to his own experience of living in Bengaluru.

His childhood home had a well, when it ran dry, the family shifted to municipal supply, and when that too became unreliable, tankers filled the gap. "I started thinking about my son's future. What will water access look like for his generation?" he said.

How it works

The system uses Internet of Things (IoT) sensors placed across inlets, utilities, cooling systems, treatment plants and discharge points to continuously track flow, pressure and water quality.

These streams feed into an AI engine that learns a facility's typical consumption patterns.

Instead of just recording usage, the platform flags anomalies the moment they occur, predicts inefficiencies before they escalate and recommends corrective actions.

"A leak discovered at a large biotech facility in Bengaluru shows how this visibility translates in the field. One night, the AquaGen flagged abnormal water flow in a process block. When the operations team checked, they found an underground leak that had been running unnoticed for months because it was buried beneath infrastructure. The issue was fixed within 48 hours, and the plant cut daily losses by nearly 120 kilolitres, the equivalent of water used by more than 600 families," Mr. Roy told *The Hindu*. According to the FluxGen, industries using AquaGen have typically seen 15% to 30% reduction in overall consumption within the first six months, though the savings vary by sector and scale.

Mr. Roy explained that every feature has been shaped by operational issues raised directly by industries, and the recommendations were tailored to the challenges plants report.

Complex deployment

A more complex deployment came at the Tata Steel's plant in Odisha, where slag cooling- a water-intensive stage of steel production- had long relied on manual jets and estimates.

With no real-time visibility, leakage and overuse remained undetected, and cooling cycles were reactive rather than aligned with production.

After the AquaGen installed smart meters at key junctions and linked consumption data with production schedules, the plant began receiving automatic alerts whenever usage patterns looked abnormal.

Within three months, the slag-cooling consumption dropped from 12,837 cubic metres to 9,451 cubic metres, a 26.4% reduction. Overall the plant consumption fell by 20%, which the FluxGen said was comparable to the daily water requirement of 28,000 households.

43 students fall sick

The Hindu Bureau
YADGIR

As many as 43 students of a lower primary school located at Timmapur in Shorapur city have fallen sick after consuming midday meal on Monday. The students have been brought to the Taluk Hospital for treatment. Out of them, 42 got treatment in the outpatient department, while one student was admitted. She was then discharged, an official said.

ओएनजीसी ONGC
ऑयल एण्ड नेचुरल गैस कॉरपोरेशन लिमिटेड
Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FROM VESSEL OWNERS / OPERATORS

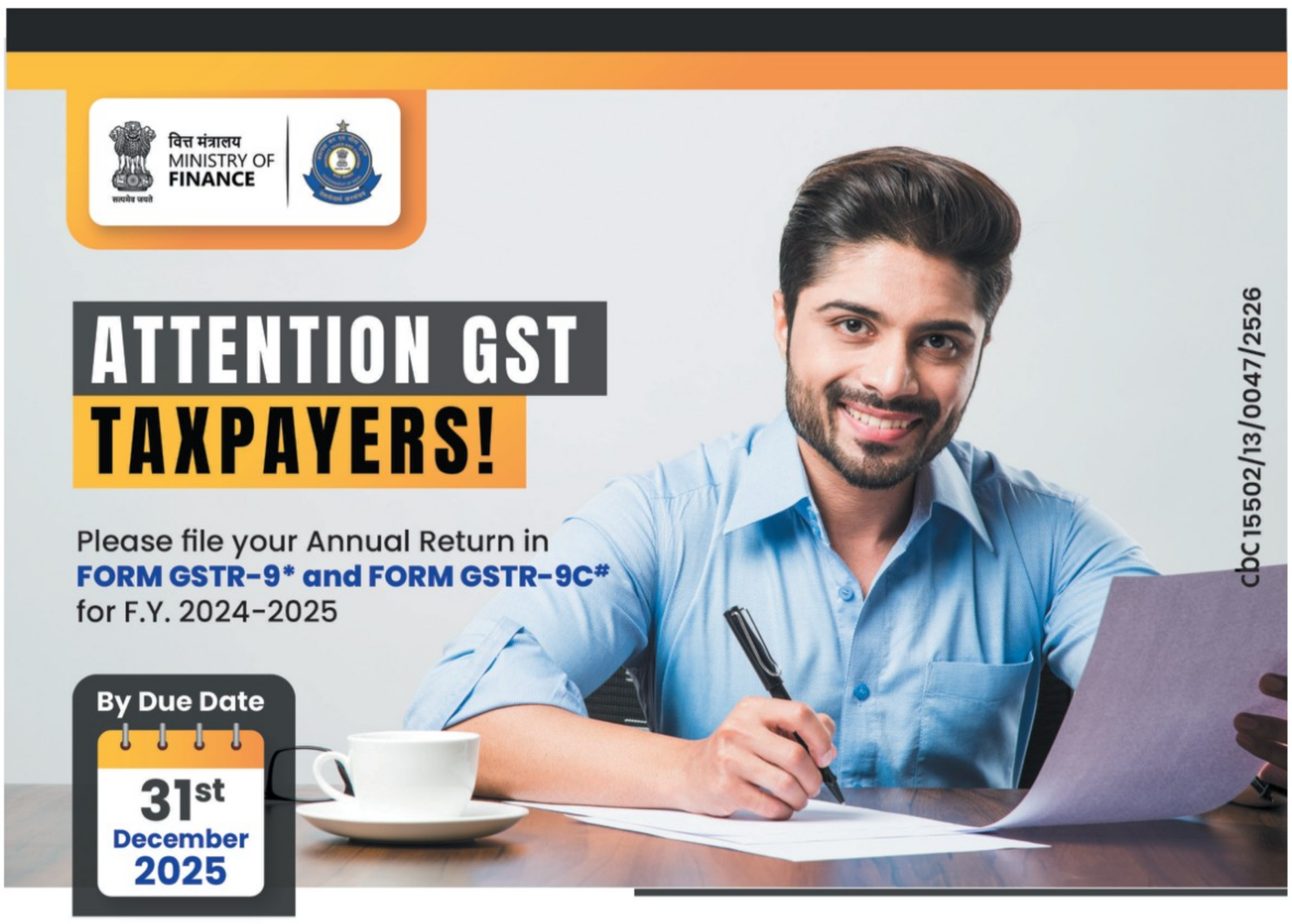
FOR HIRING OF MOBILE OFFSHORE PRODUCTION UNIT ("MOPU") FOR GAS PROCESSING IN MUMBAI HIGH FIELD.

Expression of Interest (EOI) is sought from reputed MOPU owners/ operators, either individually or in joint venture/consortium arrangements, having requisite experience, technical and financial capabilities to provide services broadly comprising (i) Supply of Jack-up Rig and conversion to MOPU as per ONGC specification, (ii) Topside modification, hook-up and commissioning, and (iii) Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Services for 7–10 years.

Interested parties are requested to submit their response on or before **09/01/2026** through hard copy/e-mail to Mr. D C Joshi, CGM(P), Email: joshi_dc@ongc.co.in, CC: vedula_kvr@ongc.co.in Clarification, if any may be obtained from CGM (P), Telephone number 022-26562606, Room no 606, 6th floor, Vasudhara Bhavan, Bandra (E), Mumbai-400051.

EOI meeting will be held via video conferencing on **22/01/2026 and 23/01/2026 at 11:30 hrs.** Parties are requested to make a 25–30 min presentation on capabilities and experience.

For details, visit https://tenders.ongc.co.in.



Mandya saw a surge in communal incidents in last 2 years

Of 54 cases booked in the State during this period, 29 cases (53.7%) were in Mandya; data shows it peaked in 2024, an election year, with 24 of the total 34 cases reported from the district

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

Mandya, traditionally not considered a communally-sensitive region, unlike the coastal districts, reported more than half of the communal incidents in Karnataka over the past two years. Of 54 cases booked in the State during this period, 29 cases (53.7%) were in Mandya.

Data, presented in the recently concluded Karnataka Legislature Session, shows it peaked in 2024, an election year, with 24 of the total 34 cases reported from Mandya.

In 2025, the district reported five cases. Mandya is the only district that has reported communal riots cases in both the years.

These include the dispute over the incident of hoisting a tricolour after removing a saffron flag at Keregodu (a site that Union Minister and incumbent MP of the constituency H.D. Kumaraswamy visited donning a saffron shawl), communal incidents over Ganesha idol immersion in Nagamangala in 2024 and Maddur in 2025, and Hanuman Jayanthi processions taken to Jumma Masjid in Srirangapatna, among others.

The dispute over the incident of hoisting a tricolour after removing a saffron flag at Keregodu was among the communal riots cases reported last year in the State. FILE PHOTO

"This data is shocking. For Mandya to account for more than half of communal riots cases in Karnataka indicates a deliberate socio-political experiment being afoot in the district," said poet Rajendra Prasad from Mandya.

C. Kumari, general secretary, Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), Mandya, argued that the lack of ideological clarity among Congress leaders has contributed to the deterioration of the social fabric in the district. "Ganesha festival has deliberately been weaponised with loud DJ music targeting minorities. This year, while there was almost a free rein for procession in Maddur, which eventually led to communal tension, there were so many hurdles created for a social harmony rally that progressive organisations in the district had planned," she said.

Disturbing harmony

	Cases over fake news	Cases over hate speech	Cases over provocative messages
2024	81	85	210
2025	119	118	328

Communal riots cases

District	2024	2025
Mandya	24	5
Mangaluru	-	10
Davanagere	6	-
Belagavi	2	-
Dharwad	2	-
Haveri	-	2
Dakshina Kannada	-	3
Total	34	20

While sources in the BJP distance themselves from communal riots, strategists in the party said that the party was clear that the highway to Old Mysore and Vokkaliga vote base for the party in the State was through Mandya. "We have very good response in Mandya and we will definitely grow there," said a senior leader.

BJP trying to capitalise on the Jumma Masjid in Srirangapatna is not new. The Sangh Parivar has been trying it for nearly two decades, but it has gained strength after an alliance with JD(S).

Special Action Force

Earlier this month, Home Minister G. Parameshwara announced that Special Action Force (SAF) to curb communal violence will be deployed in Mandya, on the lines of Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, and Shivamogga districts. However, it is a "police solution to a socio-political problem," say activists. This force is to proactively collect intelligence of instances that can provoke breach of peace and help the district police nip it in the bud.

However, a senior police official said that while a police response alone cannot solve the issue of communalism, it was an important part of countering it. "The resolve of the police leadership to act both proactively and swiftly during and after an event will definitely help curb communal riots," the officer said.

Preventive action

Data tabled by the Home Minister, responding to the same question raised by BJP MLC D.S. Arun, shows there has been an increase in cases registered for fake news, hate speech and over provocative messages from 2024 to 2025.

The data shows a possible correlation between the number of cases of these crimes and communal riots. For instance, Bengaluru police booked 58 cases over fake news, 34 cases over hate speech, and 25 over provocative messages.

Kodagu police booked 13 cases over fake news, 35 cases over hate speech, and 19 cases over provocative speech in 2024 and 2025. Both districts reported no communal riots in both years. In comparison, Mandya booked only four cases over fake news, one case over hate speech, and 15 cases over provocative speech during the same period.

A senior police official said that a SAF in Mandya will help in such interventions.

Medical boards to assess age of juveniles in conflict with law

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Commissionerate of Health and Family Welfare Services has issued guidelines regarding the establishment and operation of medical boards at the district level for age determination of juveniles in conflict with the law.

Specialists team

A circular issued by the Commissionerate mandates that the board should consist of specialists, including a physiologist, dental expert, radiologist, and forensic expert, and bars medical practitioners who are not members of the board from conducting the age assessment.

"All cases requiring age determination shall be referred exclusively to the duly constituted medical board, and not to any individual medical practitioner," it reads.

The district surgeon will be responsible for the timely coordination of the medical board meetings, conducting medical examinations without delay, documenting proceedings, and submitting the final medical board report within the prescribed time.

Given that the post of physiologist does not function as a designated member of the medical board at the district level as per the existing administrative structure of the medical board, the physiologist from the nearest Medical College shall be co-opted as a member for the cases concerned, notes the circular from the Commissionerate.

CM directs officials, Ministers to ensure quality infrastructure works in Assembly constituencies

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday reviewed the progress of the Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development Programme (CMIDP) and instructed officials and Ministers in charge of districts not to compromise on the quality of infrastructure works being taken up under the programme in Legislative Assembly constituencies.

A sum of ₹8,666.50 crore has been set aside under the CMIDP during 2025-26, and already ₹1,000 crore has been released.

Monitor closely

In the presence of his cabinet colleagues, Mr. Siddaramaiah reviewed the progress of works and instructed deputy commissioners to ensure the timely implementation of works for the release of the funds. He instructed Ministers in charge of districts to regularly monitor the quality of works.

The Chief Minister told officials to complete all tender processes for the implementation of development works under the programme before January 10, 2026.

The funds sanctioned for 19 Assembly constituencies would be released after receiving proposals from respective constituencies, he said.

A sum of ₹25 crore (totalling ₹3,510 crore) was released to each Assembly segment in 2023-24. Already works (58%) costing ₹2,040 crore had been completed, and ₹920 crore had been reimbursed. It was ordered to release ₹1,205 crore during the winter session of the legislature in Belagavi, he said.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Home Minister G. Parameshwara at a meeting with officials in Bengaluru. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A proposal of ₹1,890 crore had been sanctioned for repairing roads damaged during the 2024-25 monsoon, and ₹250 crore had been released so far.

Railway projects

Directing officials to take up the land acquisition process for railway projects as a priority, the Chief Minister said work on railway lines between Kudachi-Bagalkot, Tumakuru-Davangere, Beluru-Hassan, Shivamogga-Ranebennur, and Dharwad-Belagavi is to be commenced on time.

A total of 16,554 acres is needed for railway lines in Karnataka, and of this, 84% of the land required for projects has been acquired. Another 2,685 acres are to be acquired, he said.

The State government has to provide a sum of ₹2,581.67 crore for the project and ₹2,950.22 crore for land acquisition.

Works on six airports were in progress in different stages. The Chief Minister instructed officials to release compensation to owners of land who lost their properties to the airport in Hassan.

Maize procurement

A total of 17,350 tonnes of maize has been procured, and another 76,430 tonnes are to be procured. An indent has been placed to procure 93,782 tonnes of maize, Mr. Siddaramaiah said.

Dharmasthala case: Hearing adjourned to January 3

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

The Belthangady court in Dakshina Kannada on Monday further adjourned to January 3, 2026, for pronouncing its decision on taking cognisance of the report of Special Investigation Team (SIT) in the Dharmasthala case.

Second time

This is the second time the court is adjourning the case. Earlier, Additional Civil Judge and Judicial Magistrate First Class, T. H. Vijayendra heard Prosecutor Divyaraj Hegde and posted the matter for pronouncing its decision to December 26 and then to December 29. On Monday, the Magistrate further adjourned the matter to January 3.

Demand for Kittur Karnataka Development Board grows louder

Girish Pattanashetti
HUBBALLI

Even as the Karnataka government passed a resolution seeking matching grant for Kalyana Karnataka Region Development Board (KKRDB) from the Centre, on the Vidarbha Model, during the just-concluded Winter Session of the State legislature in Belagavi, a demand for a similar development board for Kittur Karnataka is now getting louder.

There are 56 Assembly constituencies in the Kittur Karnataka region, and a petition with the demand for a board, with signatures of all the MLAs, barring the eight Ministers from the region, was submitted to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah during the winter session.

The petition demanded formation of Kittur Karnataka Development Board and an annual grant of ₹5,000 crore for facilitating comprehensive development of the region.

Kittur Karnataka (earlier known as Bombay Karnataka) comprises the districts of Dharwad, Belagavi, Gadag, Haveri, Bagalkot, Vijayapura, and Uttara Kannada districts.

Legislators of Kittur Karnataka like Navalgund MLA N.H. Konaraddi, who has taken the initiative of mustering support for the demand, argue that this region requires special assistance.

N.H. Konaraddi, MLA for Navalgund, submitting a petition with signatures of MLAs from Kittur Karnataka region to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Belagavi recently. FILE PHOTO

Why the need

"Compared to other areas, Kittur Karnataka region figures low in terms of economic and human development indices. The average per capital income of this region is lower than that of the State. There is need for giving boost to industrial development and infrastructure here," said Mr. Konaraddi.

As per the Economic Survey of Karnataka (2024-25), the per capita income of Belagavi division is ₹2,00457 and that of Kalaburagi ₹1,73,226, while it is ₹5,01,383 for Bengaluru region, and ₹3,59,177 for Mysuru region. The per capita income of Bengaluru region without Bengaluru Urban district is ₹2,71,519.

The KKRDB, which now exists, covers 42 Assembly constituencies (as per the recent restructuring of Assembly constituencies) in the districts of Bidar, Ballari, Kalaburagi, Koppal, Raichur, Yadigiri, and Vijayanagara.

The region being the second largest arid region in the country has already been given special status under Article 371-J of Indian Constitution and the board receives grants from the State government for taking up various developmental initiatives.

The State has allocated funds to the tune of ₹5,000 crore to KKRDB, and now wants the Centre to give matching grant on the lines of special grants given to Vidarbha in Maharashtra.

The Dr. Nanjundappa-led committee on regional imbalance had used various indicators on five different sectors to arrive at Comprehensive Composite Development Index (CCDI) for 175 taluks of the State in 2002.

Based on CCDI, it had identified 114 taluks as backward, grouped into four categories of backwardness.

The Dharwad-based Centre for Multi Disciplinary Research, which carried out a critical analysis of Dr. Nanjundappa Committee Report and its implementation in 2014, brought down the number of backward taluks to 109.

According to the 2014 analysis, while majority of the taluks of Kalyana Karnataka region remain in the most backward category, there were some from Kittur Karnataka region also in the same category. The other taluks of Kittur Karnataka are distributed among the more backward and backward categories.

Report in January

The State-level Regional Imbalance Redressal Committee, headed by M. Govinda Rao, is likely to submit its report in January 2026 and its analysis and recommendations are likely decide the fate of the new demand for separate board.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT, SMT. LAKSHMAMMA D/o B. N. Subbarao, SMT. PRABHAVATI w/o Late. B. S. Ramamurthy & SRI. B. S. SRINIVASAMURTHY s/o B. N. Subbarao are the absolute owners of the property described in the Schedule hereunder.

It is brought to the notice of the general public that, our client has negotiated and decided to purchase the Schedule Property from the above said owner. All persons having any claim against or to the Schedule Property or any part thereof by way of inheritance, mortgage, sale, conveyance, MOU, Agreement to Sell, G.P.A, transfer, lease deed, tenancy, license, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, gift, exchange, possession, adverse possession or otherwise howsoever are hereby required to submit the same in writing along with documentary proof to the undersigned at their office as shown below **within 10 days from the date of publication hereof**, failing which our client shall proceed without any reference to such claim and the same, if any, will be considered as waived.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Land bearing **Sy. No. 48**, measuring to an extent of **3 Acres 10 Guntas**, situated at Thimmanayakanahalli Village, Tekal Hobli, Malur Taluk, Kolar District, and bounded on the: **East by:** Venkatarajanahalli Village border; **West by:** Road; **North by:** Venkatarajanahalli Village border; **South by:** Land bearing Sy. No. 5.

Dated this 30th day of December 2025 at Bangalore

M/S. LEGAL NEXUS
ADVOCATES & CONSULTANTS
No. 428, 24th Main, 25th Cross, Sector – 2, H.S.R Layout, Bangalore – 560 102
Phone: 080-65555914
Mobile: 9945688974; 9164150690

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Shivaleela Doddalingannavar Residing at SK-402, Satvik Block Oleity Landmark, 9/1, Pipeline Road, Kurubarahalli, Bengaluru - 560086 have Changed My Name to **Shivaleela Basaprabhu Doddalingnavar** Vide Affidavit Dated **29.12.2025** sworn before Notary Mohammed Hussain K, Bangalore.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify the gereral public that my client **Mr. Hanumantha Rayappa.** Resident at S.Y.No-100/4, Sadhenahalli Village, Hesaraghatta Hobli, Bangalore 562110. He has Lost Sale Deed Document No-4167/1974-75 - Book No.1, Volume No. 2953, Page No. 37 To 40, Dated 13/10/1974, For. S.y. No. 100/4, Sadhenahalli Village, Hesaraghatta Hobli, Bangalore Measuring 12 Guntas. Bounded on **East:** Road, **West:** Property Of Kurianjappa, **North:** Property Of Dodakka, **South:** Private Property. and also has **lodged Police Complaint in Bangalore City Police, vide lost report No.1982194/2025 dated: 29/12/2025** In case anybody find said Documents, shall inform the **within 7 days** below mentioned Address or this Contact Number 7406654343.

MA & CO Advocates & Consultants
Office # 2934/B, 2nd Floor, MKK Road, "D" Block, Rajajinagar, 2nd Stage, Bangalore 560010,
Contact No: 8095521852 / 6362653681

Tel/Fax-06852-250740; e-mail - eephkrp@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, P.H. DIVISION, KORAPUT
Behind State Bank of India Koraput-Pin.754020, Telephone-cum-Fax-06852-250740
Email ID:- sephkoraput@gmail.com/ eephkrp@gmail.com
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

e-procurement Notice for 2025-26
Bid Identification No.SE,P.H.KPT-13 of 2025-26 Dt.20.12.2025

Name of work : Procurement of DI Pipes
Total No. Of works : 1 (One work)
Estimated Cost : Rs.326.10 lakh (Approx.)
Class of Contractor : Manufacturer
Period for supply of materials : 60 days

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	No. of works	Availability of Tender On-line for Bidding From	To	Date & time of opening of Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6
Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Koraput	SE,P.H.KPT-13 of 2025-26 Dt.20.12.2025	1 (One)	11.00 A.M. 01.01.2026	05.00 P.M. 15.01.2026	11.00 A.M. 16.01.2026

Further details can be seen from the **e-Procurement Portal**: "https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in"

Sd/- (Er. Chiranjibi Mahali),
Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division Koraput.
C-1892: OIPR-13008/11/0033/2526

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

SMT ANNAPOORNA w/o US Subramanian (Umayalpuram), Retd DoT attained Sivaloka on 25/12/25. Contact Raju 9884041682

SAD DEMISE

K L RAMAMOORTHY
19th December, 2025
Deputy Director (Retd.)
Government of Tamilnadu
It is with deep regret we announce the demise of F/O Shanthi Ravi
Deeply mourned by
Shanthi Ravi
Family and Friends.
Mobile: 9591979653

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY
LOVED BY EVERYONE
AN AMAZING
ANGEL

P.S.INDIRA
30-Dec-2019

INBRIEF

Sabarimala temple opens for Makaravilakku festival today

Marking the start of the second leg of the annual pilgrimage season, the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple will open for the Makaravilakku festival on Tuesday. Melshanti (head priest) E.D. Prasad will open the sanctum sanctorum at 5 p.m. Pilgrims will be permitted to climb the 18 holy steps after the lighting of the *aazhi*. The temple was closed after the Mandalam pilgrimage season on December 27.

Two women from Telangana killed in car accident in U.S.

Two women from Telangana's Mahabubabad district were killed in an accident in the United States on Saturday. P. Meghana Rani, 25, and K. Bhavana, 24, hailing from Garla and Mulkanur respectively, were on a sightseeing trip with their friends when the car they were travelling in reportedly plunged into a gorge in a hilly area in California. They had completed their Master's degrees in the U.S. and were exploring job opportunities, sources added.

First job mela for women drivers in Hyderabad

The Women Safety Wing of the Hyderabad Police, in collaboration with MOWO Social Initiatives, will host the city's first-ever job mela exclusively for women drivers aimed at promoting safe and dignified employment while strengthening women-centric transport services.

The job mela will be held on January 3 at 10.30 a.m. at the Police Training College in Amberpet. Women between the age of 21 and 45 years are eligible to participate and apply for driving-related employment opportunities.

Tirumala spruced up for Vaikuntha Ekadasi

TTD suspends paid darshan tickets for the first three days and makes arrangements for 1.76 lakh pilgrims holding Sarva Darshan tokens, with elaborate crowd-management measures in place

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUMALA

The famed hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala has been meticulously spruced up for Vaikunta Ekadasi, the most sacred festival observed on Tuesday across Sri Vaishnavite shrines.

In a significant initiative aimed at prioritising the common pilgrim, the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams(TTD) has suspended all categories of darshan tickets during the initial phase of the festival and decided to permit only Sarva Darshan or Dharma Darshan for the first three days of the 10-day Vaikunta Dwara Darshanam, beginning on Ekadasi day.

The main temple of Lord Venkateswara exquisitely decorated for the Vaikunta Ekadasi festival in Tirumala. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Elaborate arrangements have been put in place to facilitate darshan for about 1.76 lakh devotees who have already obtained online Sarva Darshan tokens for the first three days.

To ensure smooth and uninterrupted movement of pilgrims, nearly 20 hours of darshan have been scheduled on the first day of the Ekadasi festival at the temple.

Devotees holding Srivani tickets and Special Entry Darshan tokens will be permitted to have darshan from January 2 onwards.

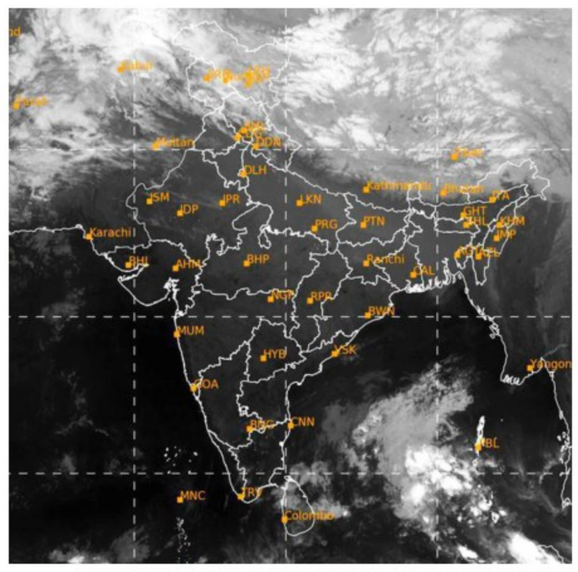
To streamline crowd management and ease access to the Vaikuntam Queue Complex, the temple administration has earmarked three separate entry routes based on darshan slots.

Pilgrims scheduled for morning darshan will be allowed entry through the Krishna Teja Guest House route, those with afternoon slots through the ATGH area, and night-slot devotees through the Silathoranam circle.

Adding to the festive grandeur, the inner precincts of the main temple complex and its surroundings have been exquisitely decorated with several tonnes of flowers in varied hues, presenting a resplendent sight in keeping with the spiritual significance of the festival.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.15 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Thunderstorm with lightning & gusty winds likely at isolated places over Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Dense/very dense fog likely at isolated places over Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	17.8	14.6	Kozhikode	—	34.0	22.8
Ahmedabad	—	29.6	15.6	Kurnool	—	29.6	16.7
Aizawl	—	22.0	10.0	Lucknow	—	17.1	10.1
Allahabad	—	16.6	11.4	Madurai	—	32.0	22.0
Bengaluru	—	28.0	16.7	Mangaluru	—	32.2	20.5
Bhopal	—	27.2	5.6	Mumbai	—	32.1	17.0
Bhubaneswar	—	27.2	14.0	Mysuru	—	29.2	13.0
Chandigarh	—	16.7	7.2	New Delhi	—	20.3	8.3
Chennai	—	29.1	21.1	Patna	—	14.7	12.6
Coimbatore	—	30.4	20.4	Port Blair	1	30.4	26.2
Dehradun	—	17.4	7.8	Puducherry	—	28.6	21.5
Gangtok	—	15.1	8.9	Pune	—	29.7	14.7
Goa	—	33.0	19.2	Raipur	—	27.6	11.7
Guwahati	—	18.5	15.6	Ranchi	—	24.3	7.0
Hubballi	—	29.0	13.0	Shillong	—	16.3	7.4
Hyderabad	—	27.2	13.0	Shimla	—	21.0	7.0
Imphal	—	23.1	11.0	Srinagar	—	13.3	3.0
Jaipur	—	25.1	9.3	Thiruvananthapuram	—	33.9	22.8
Kochi	—	31.6	23.4	Tiruchi	—	30.1	21.4
Kohima	—	14.2	6.0	Vijayawada	—	28.5	19.0
Kolkata	—	18.8	13.5	Visakhapatnam	—	27.9	19.5

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.67	..64	26	... 212	...127	
Bengaluru	...4	..—	30	... 176	...138	
Chennai	...8	..12	28	... 253	...135	
Delhi	.11	120	94	... 460	...402	
Hyderabad	.12	..17	57	... 110	...127	
Kolkata	.10	..29	19	... 247	...163	
Lucknow	...6	..44	79	... 216	...187	
Mumbai	...8	..84	54	... 145	...126	
Pune	.19	119	88	... 280	...230	
Visakhapatnam	.21	..80	52	... 306	...265	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Noida, Uttar Paradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 410 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Damoh, Madhya Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 28

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Students must think four years ahead, select engineering courses with relevance: experts

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Choosing an engineering stream only based on its popularity may not work out well for students, as the course may lose relevance by the time the students graduate, speakers at a webinar said on Sunday.

The domains of engineering were evolving so rapidly that the core subject and verticals selected by students may not remain relevant when they graduate, the speakers explained. It was, hence, important for students to think ahead by four years, they underscored.

The webinar was organised jointly by SASTRA Deemed to be University and *The Hindu Education Plus* as part of their Career X for Gen Z series.

By 2030, there will be a demand for an estimated 30 lakh engineers with relevant skills, said John Bosco Balaguru Rayappan, dean of Sponsored Research and Professor, School of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, SASTRA Deemed University. R. Narayanan, senior partner and head (Education and Skill Development), KPMG India; Anamika Tiwari Chada, HR head, Staples India; and Sowmya Suresh, vice-president and head, Entry Cadre Fresher Management, HCL Tech also spoke.

The webinar can be viewed at https://newsth.live/THSASEY

A.P. Cabinet approves loan of ₹7,387 cr. for projects in Amaravati

G.V.R. Subba Rao
VIJAYAWADA

The Cabinet meeting, chaired by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, approved a series of major policy decisions on Monday, covering infrastructure development, social welfare, administrative restructuring and public service improvements across the State.

Among the key approvals were a ₹7,387.7 crore loan from the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) under the NIDA scheme for infrastructure projects in the capital city Amaravati, and the introduction of a 10% "Road Safety Cess" on motor vehicles subject to life tax.

Minister for Revenue, Registration and Stamps Anagani Satya Prasad told presspersons that the Cabinet ratified government orders issued on December 11 by the Municipal Administration & Urban Development Department.

These orders authorise the AP Capital Region Development Authority Commissioner in Vijayawada to secure the NABARD loan. Subject to a 5% guarantee fee, the funds will be used for critical infrastructure development in Amaravati.

On the welfare front, the Cabinet approved a 3.64% increase in Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) for government employees and pensioners, effective from January 1, 2024.

The government also outlined plans to develop Greater Vijayawada and Greater Tirupati as major urban centres.

Going with the flow

Paddle up: A kayaker practising in the Hussain Sagar Lake in Hyderabad on Monday evening. G. RAMAKRISHNA

Revanth lacks knowledge of irrigation projects: BRS

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president and Sircilla MLA K.T. Rama Rao on Monday alleged that the Congress government in Telangana was deliberately delaying the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Project (PRLIP) for political reasons.

He said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy lacked a basic understanding of irrigation projects and water allocation.

'Allocation cut'

'Interacting with media-persons at the Assembly media point in Hyderabad, Mr. Rama Rao alleged that the government was blocking the progress out of fear that completion of the project would strengthen former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao's legacy and to avoid displeasing Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu over Krishna river water sharing.

K.T. Rama Rao

Stating that an allocation of 299 tmc ft of water from the Krishna had been agreed upon earlier during the tenure of the Congress government, he found fault with the government for agreeing to "just 45 tmc ft water" for the Palamuru-Rangareddy project.

Revanth greets KCR on Day 1

HYDERABAD

As the Winter Session of the Telangana Assembly began on Monday, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy walked up to BRS leader K. Chandrashekhar Rao and greeted him. This comes days after the war of words between the Congress and the BRS.

Two held for peddling drugs; ₹2.5 cr. worth contraband seized

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Ahead of New Year celebrations, the Central Crime Branch (CCB) Narcotics Control Wing has arrested a Nigerian national and a delivery executive and seized narcotic substances worth ₹2.5 crore in two separate operations in the city.

The officials arrested 45-year-old Christopher in the Soladevanahalli Police Station limits, and seized 1.070 kg of MDMA crystals, 60 ecstasy pills, ₹2 lakh in cash, one mobile phone, and a laptop.

The total value of the seized items is estimated at ₹2.25 crore.

The police said the accused arrived in India last year on a business visa and was sourcing MDMA at low prices allegedly from foreign nationals based in Delhi and Mumbai. He was preparing to supply the drugs to known customers during New Year celebrations.

Investigations revealed that the accused had been involved in drug peddling earlier as well, and a case under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act was previously been registered against him at the Soladevanahalli Police Station.

He was then remanded in judicial custody. After his release, he allegedly resumed drug-trafficking activities.

In another operation conducted in the Bandepalya Police Station limits, the CCB arrested Naveen Raj, 26, an inter-State drug peddler and seized 100 LSD strips, 5 gm of cocaine, and a mobile phone used for the crime. The seized contraband is valued at ₹25 lakh.

Delivery executive held

The accused, a native of Tamil Nadu, was working as a delivery executive for an online commercial company and was also allegedly peddling drugs. The police said he used to procure LSD strips and cocaine from unidentified persons at lower prices and sell them at higher rates to known customers.

Lost local body election to Cong.-BJP's politics of caste and religion: CPI(M)

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The ruling CPI(M) on Monday attributed its "unexpected" poor showing in the local body elections in some measure to a perceived surge in religion and caste identity politics stoked by the Congress, the BJP, and Muslim outfits.

CPI(M) State secretary M.V. Govindan told a news conference that the propaganda that the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government was complicit in the Sabarimala gold theft disrupted the livelihood and development-based political debate at the hustings. The Congress and the BJP had no tangible issue to campaign against the government, forcing them to create a divisive narrative.

M.V. Govindan

'Good track record'

Mr. Govindan said the right-wing corporate media helped the Congress and the BJP shift the political discourse away from issues concerning the working class to schismatic grievance politics centred narrowly on religion and caste. The cacophony drowned out the LDF government's palpable track record, including radical infrastructure development, despite the Centre's restraining fiscal levers and a rapidly expanding social welfare net.

He said tactical cross-voting by the Congress and the BJP to diminish the LDF, CPI(M)'s organisational weakness in upscale urban neighbourhoods, and the party's slackness in countering divisive propaganda helped the Opposition parties. He cited the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation as a stark example of last-minute tactical cross-voting between the Congress and the BJP. "The UDF finished a distant third in the 41 divisions won by the BJP," he said.

However, Mr. Govindan claimed that the LDF, weighed down by nearly 10 years of incumbency, defied political gravity by significantly increasing its vote share in the local body polls compared to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

The LDF improved its vote share from 33.6% in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls to 39.7% in the local body elections. The LDF maintained a clear lead in 60 Assembly constituencies.

Model conduct

India must improve access to AI resources, and upskill its workforce

India has been regulating Artificial Intelligence (AI) use by expecting due diligence from platforms under the IT Act and Rules, regulating the financial sector, and with privacy and data protection Rules. It does not yet have a consumer safety regime that deals with the state's duty of care. China pitched such a regime with draft rules that it unveiled last week, which target emotionally interactive services, and propose to require companies to warn against excessive use and intervene when they detect signs of extreme emotional states. If these rules seem justified for targeting psychological dependence that general rules about unlawful content do not address, they may also be harsh because expecting providers to identify users' states can incentivise more intimate monitoring. India's posture is less intrusive, but also more incomplete, because it banks on existing laws. Thus, it regulates adjacent risks but has not articulated a duty of care *vis-à-vis* AI product safety, especially for psychological harms. MeitY has used the IT Rules to push platforms to curb deepfakes and fraud, and define and label "synthetically generated" content. Financial regulators have also adopted structural measures, with the RBI setting expectations to govern model risk in credit and developing its FREE-AI framework process and SEBI pushing for clear accountability on how regulated entities use AI tools. While some measures are preemptive, MeitY has been largely reactive.

India has a large ecosystem that adopts models but is far behind the U.S. and China in building frontier models of its own. In this context, it should beware the cons of 'regulate first, build later', especially since domestic capacity is lacking. A more practical way might be to consider how it can nurture a frontier model and govern the overall use of models, many of which will remain privately built and foreign for a while, inside Indian markets. On the first count, India can focus on improving access to computational resources, upskilling the workforce, increasing public procurement, and translating research to industry while sidestepping the pitfall of paralysis by consensus, which could increase dependency. On the second, India should consider regulating downstream use more assertively without choking upstream capability. It can do this by adding obligations on companies that are deploying products in high-risk contexts, and regulating how they monitor and respond to a model's behaviour, to existing privacy and consumer protection rules, for example, by expecting companies to submit incident reports, rather than requiring them to monitor users' emotions. This way, India can write rules for how Indians use models without assuming that the global technology trajectory will rearrange itself to match its preferences.

Mindless bombing

Trump's military strikes and religious rhetoric will worsen situation in Nigeria

On Christmas Day, Nigeria became the latest target of U.S. President Donald Trump's bombing spree. Mr. Trump had earlier claimed that Christians were facing "genocide" – an allegation Abuja has strongly rejected. The U.S. targeted two alleged Islamic State camps in Sokoto, a northwestern State. During last year's presidential campaign, he had repeatedly criticised what he called America's "forever wars". He styled himself as the 'President of peace', taking credit for ending several conflicts, including the combat between India and Pakistan. In reality, however, Mr. Trump is little different from his predecessors, who deployed America's military might at will against weaker nations. Since returning to office, Mr. Trump has bombed Yemen, Syria, Somalia and Iran. He is also overseeing an ongoing bombing campaign off the Venezuelan coast, targeting civilian boats for 'carrying drugs'. In Nigeria's case, Mr. Trump has fused military aggression with religion in an apparent bid to appeal to his Christian base. While he insists that his actions are aimed at protecting Nigeria's Christians, the realities are complex.

Nigeria's 237 million people are roughly divided between Muslims, who predominantly live in the north, and Christians, who are concentrated in the south. In recent years, there has been a surge in Islamist militancy, particularly in the north. Two major Islamist groups – Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) – operate mostly in the northeast and northwest. The collapse of state institutions, porous borders and free flow of weapons have turned the Lake Chad region into a hotbed of jihadist activity. Boko Haram and ISWAP, along with the Islamic State Sahel Province, target both state apparatuses and local populations, regardless of their faith. In northern Nigeria, Muslims are the primary victims of Islamist violence. U.S. policies towards the region have also contributed to the spread of jihadist activity in West Africa and the Sahel. The NATO-led bombing that toppled Libya's Gaddafi regime in 2011 unleashed armed fighters and weapons across the region. What Africa needs is a coherent regional counter-terrorism strategy, focused on building state capacity at the local level and enhancing ground level cooperation against jihadist groups. The U.S. should play the role of a facilitator, not an arsonist. Such a strategy is conspicuously absent today. Worse, repeated coups and state collapses have created a vacuum which the jihadists are eager to exploit. Mr. Trump's episodic military strikes, along with religious rhetoric, risk worsening the ground situation, ultimately benefiting the very forces he claims to be fighting.

The quiet foundations for India's next growth phase

Hardeep S. Puri

is Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India

As 2025 draws to a close, the loud headlines are easy to spot, but what is easier to miss is the quieter work of governance, the steady, week after week clearing of bottlenecks – the cumulative push is what I mean by Reform Express 2025.

India crossed about $4.1 trillion in nominal GDP and overtook Japan as the world's fourth largest economy. Standard and Poor's upgraded India's sovereign rating to BBB after 18 years, signalling that the macro story has acquired durability, not just speed. In an uncertain world where political churn has become the norm, India's stable leadership makes reforms credible, and credible reforms convert private caution into private investment.

I have seen, across negotiating tables, from the GATT and WTO system to multilateral forums, that rules are only as good as the incentives they create. When procedures are opaque, discretion expands, and then even well-intentioned policy ends up discouraging enterprise. When procedures are clean and time-bound, competition thrives, investment plans get executed, and jobs follow.

India's total exports hit $825.25 billion during 2024-25, representing an annual growth of over 6%. To support this volume of trade, the government introduced several digital tools such as The Trade Connect ePlatform, a single digital window for exporters, and the Trade Intelligence and Analytics (TIA) portal for providing real-time market data.

The trade agreements

The India-United Kingdom Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement signed in July 2025 created a stronger platform for Indian exporters, with wide duty-free access and clearer pathways for services and skilled mobility. In December 2025, India signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with Oman, strengthening a strategic economic corridor for goods, services, and investment. India also concluded negotiations for a free trade agreement with New Zealand, expanding India's reach into high value markets and setting a template for disciplined, commercially meaningful agreements.

India's startup sector expanded to include over two lakh government-recognised startups, which helped create more than 21 lakh jobs. The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) processed over 326 million orders, averaging more than 5.9 lakh daily transactions. Additionally, the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) saw its cumulative transaction value cross ₹16.41 lakh crore, with 11 lakh micro and small enterprises receiving orders worth over ₹7.35 lakh crore.

India also improved its position in the Global Innovation Index, rising to 38th place among 139 economies. Efforts to simplify business operations resulted in the reduction of over 47,000 compliances and the decriminalisation of 4,458 legal provisions. By late November, the National Single Window System processed more than 8.29 lakh approvals. Infrastructure planning also saw changes as the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan opened to the private sector, and the Project Monitoring Group portal has onboarded over 3,000 projects valued at more than ₹76 lakh crore.

In a quiet and cumulative way, 'Reform Express 2025' is sowing the seeds of the next phase of India's double-digit growth

Better legislation

Embracing trust-based governance, Parliament passed the Repealing and Amending Bill 2025, clearing out 71 obsolete Acts that had outlived their purpose. Ease of doing business also moved closer to the entrepreneur through district-level reform frameworks, including the District Business Reform Action Plan 2025, which seeks to make local administrations more responsive, predictable, and accountable.

A modern labour regime matters for scale, for manufacturing, and for a services economy that wants to formalise jobs while expanding social security coverage. With the four labour codes coming into effect from November 21, 2025, 29 central labour laws have been consolidated into a simpler framework covering wages, industrial relations, social security and workplace safety.

The Securities Markets Code Bill was introduced to modernise securities law and strengthen the Securities and Exchange Board of India's investigative and enforcement capacity, with proposals for specialised market courts, stronger information sharing with regulators, and time-bound grievance redress. At a moment when retail participation has expanded and India is drawing larger global portfolio interest, regulatory clarity becomes part of national competitiveness, helping savings flow into productive investment.

Logistics is where reform becomes visible in costs, and 2025 saw a push to modernise the maritime backbone of trade. Nearly 95% of India's trade by volume and about 70% by value moves through maritime routes, so port and shipping efficiency is a competitiveness issue. The Indian Ports Act, 2025 replaced a colonial-era framework and introduced modern governance tools, including state-level dispute resolution, a statutory coordination council, and stronger norms on safety, disaster readiness and environmental preparedness. The Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 and the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, 2025 further modernised shipping law, updating rules, liabilities and dispute frameworks to reflect contemporary commerce.

The Cabinet approved a package of ₹69,725 crore to strengthen shipbuilding, including a Maritime Development Fund of ₹25,000 crore and components for financial assistance and development, points to a larger ambition: build industrial depth, reduce dependence, and keep freight value within India over time. This is industrial policy in the classic sense, creating an ecosystem where private capital can enter with a clearer risk framework, and where jobs are created not only in ports but across shipyards, components, engineering, and services.

A focus on energy

Energy reforms, too, were designed for long cycle investment. The Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Act, 2025 and the new Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules 2025 sought to reduce investor risk by emphasising stability of terms during the life of a lease, moving toward a single petroleum lease across the project life cycle, and putting clearer timelines on approvals. The Open Acreage Licensing Policy continued widening the exploration map, with Round X offering 25 blocks across about 0.2 million square kilometres, predominantly offshore, including deepwater and ultra deepwater opportunities. Alongside this, the National Deep Water Exploration Mission signalled a strategic focus on domestic resources, technology, and capability in complex exploration.

Reform Express 2025 also carried a strategic energy and technology dimension. Budget 2025 set out a Nuclear Energy Mission with an outlay of ₹20,000 crore to accelerate small modular reactors and other advanced designs, aligned with the national objective of reaching 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047, and a target of five indigenously designed operational small modular reactors by 2033. The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill is a huge leap for modernising India's civil nuclear framework and opening a pathway for carefully regulated private participation. Nuclear energy adds firm, low carbon power to the grid, and strengthens India's ability to build advanced manufacturing, data infrastructure, and energy intensive industry with greater confidence.

Put together, these reforms show a pattern: clean up the statute book, decriminalise the trivial, modernise labour compliance, strengthen market governance, digitise trade processes, fix logistics, and de-risk long cycle energy investment.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has consistently argued that the state's job is to reduce the burden on entrepreneurs so that productivity can compound. That is the strategic meaning of Reform Express 2025. The seeds of the next phase of double-digit growth are sown in this quiet, cumulative work, and India is doing it with a steadiness that many economies have lost.

Invalidate all forms of unilateral talaq

A. Faizur Rahman

is an independent researcher and the Secretary-General of the Chennai-based Islamic Forum for the Promotion of Moderate Thought

On November 19, 2025, in *Benazeer Heena vs Union of India and Ors.*, a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court of India comprising Justices Surya Kant, Ujjal Bhuyan and N. Kotiswar Singh, expressed strong reservations about *talaq-e-hasan*, a practice that allows a Muslim man to divorce his wife by pronouncing *talaq* once a month for three consecutive months during *tuhr*, the period of a woman's ritual purity between menstrual cycles. The divorce becomes irrevocable upon the third pronouncement, unless it is withdrawn earlier.

In Heena's case, the husband had communicated the *talaq-e-hasan* through his advocate without signing the document himself. The Court was visibly disturbed by the fact that advocates were granting divorces and remarked: "Tomorrow, what will happen if a client disowns the advocate?... Should a civilized society allow this kind of practice?"

A contract between equals

The concern of the judges was entirely justified, for the *Koran* does not grant men a superior status that entitles them to unilaterally dissolve a marriage either directly or through their agents. This is because, unlike traditions that treat marriage as an indissoluble sacrament, Islam views it as a firm but dissoluble contract between two equals.

The *Koran* uses two legally perceptive terms for marriage – *uqdatan-nikah* (2:235, 2:237), which means the "bond of marriage", and *meesaaqan ghaleean* (4:21), a solemn covenant between a man and a woman that enables them to live together in intimate companionship.

From a contemporary standpoint, these terms parallel the modern prenuptial contract, and thus demand that both spouses be consenting adults acting freely and with full knowledge. The underlying premise is one of equality between two autonomous persons, which negates any hierarchical assumption that places the husband above the wife. For this reason, a unilateral termination of marriage by the husband is impermissible in Islam. Such an act would also contravene the cardinal principle of natural justice, *nemo iudex in causa sua* (that no person may sit in judgment over his own dispute) which Islam upholds.

Only the *Koranic* process, which may be made gender-neutral, must be retained

The *Koranic* procedure

To guard against deviations from its egalitarian approach, the *Koran* treats divorce extensively in chapters 2, 4, and 65 – *al-Baqara*, *al-Nisa*, and *al-Talaq* – and stipulates four distinct conciliatory measures before the pronouncement of the first *talaq*.

First, it recommends (in 4:34-35) private resolution (*'izu hunna*). If this fails, the next step is temporary physical separation (*uhjuru hunna*). Should discord continue, the husband is advised, as a third step, to communicate clearly to his wife (*izribu hunna*) the seriousness of the dispute and attempt to repair the relationship.

For instance, he may tell his wife that unresolved tensions could escalate into public gossip, potentially harming the family. If reconciliation still remains elusive, the *Koran*, as a fourth step, instructs that the issue be brought before two arbiters from the families of both spouses.

Only after all four steps fail is the first *talaq* permitted, followed by *iddah* (2:228-232; 65:1-4). Within *iddah* – three menstrual cycles per 2:228, 229 – no more than two *talaqs* may be issued. For post-menopausal or amenorrhoeic women, *iddah* lasts three months; for pregnant women, it extends until childbirth (65:4).

If reconciliation does not occur during *iddah*, the final irrevocable *talaq* may be issued after *iddah* ends (2:231). Once pronounced, the final *talaq* terminates the marital relationship completely.

However, even after the lapse of *iddah*, the Koran permits reunion if the final *talaq* has not been invoked: "When you divorce women and they complete their term [*iddah*], do not prevent them from marrying their [former] husbands if they mutually agree on equitable terms" (2:232). In other words, after *iddah*, the couple may either re-contract the marriage on fresh terms or pursue permanent dissolution effected through the third and final *talaq*, declared before two witnesses (65:2).

This is the only *talaq* procedure authorised by the *Koran* and exemplified by the Prophet. It applies to both men and women, consistent with Islam's prohibition of gender-based discrimination. Accordingly, all other modes of divorce, including *talaq-e-bid'a*, *talaq-e-hasan*, *talaq-e-ahsan*, and *talaq-e-tafweed*, find no support in the *Koran* or the *hadith*.

They originate in *fatawa* traditions crafted by sectarian jurists who, shaped by entrenched patriarchy, rejected women's autonomy and legal personhood. Their stance is starkly reflected in their validation of *talaq-e-hasan*, which permits a husband to dissolve a marriage through an appointed agent (*vakeel*) under the concept of *tawkeel* (agency) – a notion wholly unsupported by *Koranic* or Prophetic precedent and deeply demeaning to women

An overview

The Supreme Court would thus be on firm constitutional and Islamic footing were it to strike down all unilateral divorce practices available exclusively to Muslim men, retaining only the *Koranic* process, which may be made gender-neutral.

E-mail: themoderates2020@gmail.com Twitter: @FaizEngineer

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Congress, path ahead

Senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh's sudden but indirect dig at the Congress culture of adhering to one upmanship or bowing to the diktats of a family can only be taken with a pinch of salt (Inside pages, December 29). Top Congressmen, and this includes Mr. Digvijay Singh, have all along been content with paying obeisance to one family. It paid them dividends in the form of influential posts in the organisation and at the governmental level. Congressmen at the grass-root levels have been made to believe, erroneously, that being subservient to one family is the only way to survive. The sudden rethink about the party's path is because the results of many an election are not favourable to the party. Another senior Congressman, Shashi Tharoor, has already taken the lead in expressing his views in a discreet manner. The Congress is now caught in its own web largely because of its own actions. It will take ages for Congressmen to extricate themselves from this rot and transform the party into one that is run in a truly democratic manner.

V. Subramanian,
Chennai

Ironically, the issues raised by both leaders — which is to strengthen the Congress's grass-root level organisation — seems to have fallen in deaf ears. The Gandhi family, especially Rahul Gandhi, has time and again failed to win election after elections . Mr. Gandhi's undignified and personal attacks on the Prime Minister have also backfired. It is time senior members of the Congress Party take the front seat, ensure that the voices of the grass-root workers are heard, and plan realistic strategies to win elections.

N. Mahadevan,
Chennai

The messaging

The Prime Minister attending Christmas service at a church in Delhi, but maintaining a stony silence amid concerns over attacks targeting churches and prayer meets exposes the dichotomy and duplicity of the BJP leadership. Mere lip service, photo ops and decorous solemnity at religious ceremonies are nothing but appeasement politics. The deadly cocktail of mixing religion and politics has seen unrest and violence in our neighbouring countries. It is prudent we learn from their mistakes and make necessary corrections.

Dr. Biju C. Mathew,
Thiruvananthapuram

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

Why inclusion drives business growth

Harish Iyer

equal rights activist and head, Diversity Equity and Inclusion, Axis Bank

Last month, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to revisit its decade-old ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* legalising same-sex marriage. It turned away an appeal by Kim Davis, a former court clerk, who had been ordered by a lower court to pay compensation to a same-sex couple after refusing to grant them a marriage licence. Ms. Davis had argued that same-sex marriage conflicted with her beliefs as an Apostolic Christian.

The Supreme Court's decision reminded us that equality, though contested, has firm foundations. Yet, the real shift is not happening only in courtrooms; it is unfolding in boardrooms as well. Legal skirmishes may linger, but markets have already moved. The LGBTQIA+ community is no longer a niche; it is a global consumer force shaping trends, driving loyalty, and rewriting brand narratives, even as society wrestles with the complexities of representation and acceptance.

And beyond the ethical imperative of inclusion, there is a compelling business case, rooted in economic impact and consumer behaviour, for companies to deeply engage with and prioritise the LGBTQIA+ consumer base. With an estimated $3.9 trillion in yearly spending power worldwide, the message is clear: businesses that fail to authentically engage this market risk falling behind.

The lucrative rainbow market

As it stands, the exclusion and discrimination faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals carry a substantial economic burden, impacting national economies and stifling human potential. Research, such as studies by the World Bank, has illuminated these tangible costs. In India, homophobia and LGBTQIA+ exclusion are estimated to cost the economy between 0.1% and 1.7% of its GDP. This significant figure stems from various channels, including health disparities and labour-related losses.

However, despite the confines, the community remains strong as a consumer. Often referred to as the "pink economy" or "rainbow market," the economic influence of India's LGBTQIA+ community represents one of the most significant, yet under-recognised, market opportunities in the country's development story. Estimates suggest India is home to approximately 135 million LGBTQIA+ individuals, representing nearly 10% of the nation's 1.4 billion people. What makes this community particularly noteworthy is its remarkable purchasing power, estimated at $168 billion in nominal GDP terms. This is an economic force comparable to some of India's major industries, one that demands deeper understanding from businesses and policymakers alike.

Inclusive marketing goes beyond checking diversity boxes. It is about creating campaigns that reflect the world as it truly is. Today's consumers, especially younger generations, expect brands to not only acknowledge but celebrate differences in identity, culture, and experience. When companies embrace inclusion, they forge stronger emotional connections with their audience, turning passive buyers into passionate advocates. A workplace that visibly champions inclusion attracts and retains top talent, fostering a culture where employees feel valued and motivated. Brands that take meaningful action beyond designated periods show genuine respect for the community, not just as a cause, but as a valued consumer segment.

Non-performative allyship

Global consumer sentiment toward brands promoting LGBTQIA+ rights has shown a notable shift in recent years. Between 2021 and 2025, support for companies actively advocating for LGBTQIA+ equality declined from 49% to 41% across 23 surveyed markets, as per Ipsos LGBT+ Pride Report 2025. This 8% point drop coincides with a rise in opposition, which grew from 16% to 23% during the same period.

Several factors may be contributing to this trend. While seasonal advertising, such as Pride Month campaigns in June, has traditionally been a key moment for brands to engage with LGBTQIA+ audiences, there is growing fatigue around what many perceive as performative efforts that lack substantive, year-round commitment. This shift, though, should not be interpreted as declining support for LGBTQIA+ rights. Rather, it reflects changing consumer expectations about corporate social responsibility and concrete action. It is important to recognise that the LGBTQIA+ community represents a valuable consumer segment that, like any other, deserves consistent engagement beyond seasonal visibility.

So, what does genuine inclusion look like in practice? First, it requires representation in advertising and product development. Second, it demands corporate advocacy. Finally, and perhaps most important, inclusion must extend beyond marketing and into corporate policies. This means offering trans-inclusive healthcare, supporting LGBTQIA+ employee resource groups, and continuing to be an active advocate especially when the legislative winds blow in another direction. LGBTQIA+ consumers value conscience, commitment, and clarity. When internal practices align with external messaging, brands build trust — and trust drives loyalty. This viewpoint suggests that the era of easy wins through LGBTQIA+ marketing may be ending, but the potential for meaningful brand differentiation through authentic inclusion remains significant.

The Kim Davis case reinforces a powerful truth: progress may face resistance, but equality continues to hold firm. For businesses, this is a reminder that inclusion is not a seasonal gesture but a strategic imperative.

Progress may face resistance, but equality continues to hold firm. For businesses, this is a reminder that inclusion is not a seasonal gesture but a strategic imperative

Back in the game in Punjab

The SAD's revival and its possible alliance with the BJP could change equations

STATE OF PLAY

Vikas Vasudeva
vikas.vasudeva@thehindu.co.in

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) victory in Punjab's recent Zila Parishad (district council) and Panchayat Samiti (block council) elections was not surprising. Yet, the results show a shifting political landscape. They indicate that the Congress, the principal Opposition party in the State, may no longer be the obvious challenger to the AAP. The stronger-than-anticipated performance of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) signals its emergence as a serious contender in the 2027 Assembly elections.

The results for the rural body polls, held on December 14 to elect the members from the 346 zones of 22 Zila Parishads, showed the AAP capturing 218 zones. The Congress won 62, the SAD 46, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) seven, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) three, and independents 10. In the polls held in 2,834 zones of 153 Panchayat Samitis, the AAP won 1,529, the Congress 611, the SAD 449, the BJP 73, the BSP 28, and independents 144. The AAP has termed the results as a reflection of the people's trust in its government, while the Opposition parties have accused it of misusing its power during the polls.

The rural body poll results, following last month's Tarn Taran Assembly bypoll, suggest that the SAD is steadily regaining electoral ground and positioning itself as a credible contender for 2027. Meanwhile, the Congress, which appeared poised to be AAP's main challenger after its strong 2024 Lok Sabha performance, can no longer take electoral success for granted.

The momentum that seemed to be building in its favour appears to be fading. For the SAD, which suffered crushing defeats in the 2017 and 2022 Assembly elections and the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the tally may be modest, but the gains represent meaningful progress towards the century-old party's political rehabilitation.

Punjab's 2027 Assembly election could witness a far more compelling and unpredictable contest if the SAD and the BJP decide to resurrect their once-formidable alliance. For the BJP, the dismal showing in the polls serves as a stark reminder that its own electoral machinery remains insufficient to penetrate Punjab's hinterland. Clearly, the people are not ready for the party and the political terrain is far from receptive to the BJP's solo ambitions. Given this situation, an alliance may be an option for it to consider. The electoral arithmetic presents a compelling case for reconciliation as the BJP has a substantial voter base in Punjab's urban centres, industrial towns, and semi-urban constituencies, while the SAD has deep roots and enjoys organisational strength across the State's rural regions.

Recently, the BJP's national executive member, Capt. Amarinder Singh, advocated for an alliance between the two former partners. Those in political circles are watching the situation closely as there is speculation every now and then about the SAD and the BJP potentially joining hands again ahead of the Assembly elections. Earlier, the BJP State president, Sunil Jakhar, a former Congressman, had also favoured the idea of an alliance. But not everyone in the party is on the same page over this, and there is a reason for it. Over the years, the BJP has contested electoral battles in Punjab as a 'junior partner' in an alliance with the SAD. The old guard in the party's State unit believe that this restricted the BJP's growth beyond urban centres. After the SAD quit the alliance, the BJP has been pushing for its expansion across the State. At this point, reviving an alliance with the SAD would amount to relinquishing the autonomy the BJP fought so hard to establish.

The SAD and the BJP were alliance partners from 1996. However, when controversy broke out over the Centre's farm laws (which were later repealed), the SAD, one of the BJP's oldest allies, decided to break away from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in 2020. Since then, both the parties have been struggling independently in Punjab's complex political landscape.

The AAP, which swept to power in Punjab in 2022 by positioning itself as an alternative to traditional parties, will face a different challenge in 2027. This time, it would be assessed by the people on its performance and governance record rather than its novelty factor, which played a key role in its previous victory. Moreover, with the SAD showing signs of revival, and with there being a possibility of the SAD and the BJP joining hands before the polls, the AAP could face formidable obstacles in its bid to retain power.

A puzzling industrial credit-growth disconnect in FY17-FY19

The divergence provides some credence to the claim that industrial GDP is overestimated in the current NAS series

DATA POINT

Vikash Vaibhav

The Indian banking sector plays a critical role in industrial growth. It channelises household savings to provide funds to firms at affordable rates. A review of the growth of credit to industries shows four facts and a puzzling observation.

Fact 1: The share of industrial credit in total bank credit has declined from 42% in 2013 to 23% in 2024 (**Chart 1**). Such a decline is unprecedented in half a century. Credit to the services sector has benefited at the expense of industrial credit. This is largely driven by personal loans, which surpassed industrial credit share recently.

Fact 2: The nominal growth of Industrial credit has been abysmal in the last decade. During 2014-24, the compound annual growth rate was 4.1% (**Chart 2A**). Growth was 16% during 1974-90, 14% during 1990-04, and 23% in 2004-14. This pattern holds if we exclude the post-COVID-19 pandemic years. Growth was 4.1% for 2014-19.

Fact 3: This observation holds if we disaggregate the growth rates based on regions. The three most industrialised regions - western, southern, and northern (**Chart 2B**) - saw lesser growth than the India average. The higher than average growth for the central and northeastern regions (**Chart 2C**) is likely on account of their lower industrial credit share. This pattern holds when we look across industry groups. None of the broad industry groups saw credit growth in double digits in 2014-24 (**Chart 4**). Compared to this, 2004-14 saw the credit growth of each industry group in double digits.

Fact 4: The bank credit as a proportion of India's GDP, a measure of financial deepening, increased impressively during the late 1990s (about 20%) and the early 2010s (over 50%). Since then it has hovered between the 50%-55% range. A higher credit/GDP ratio is not unheard of: Japan (about 1.2), China (about 1.9), South Africa (about 0.9) and Brazil (about 0.75). This stagnancy, when seen with the declining share of industrial credit does not paint an optimistic picture.

The puzzle: **Chart 3** illustrates a consistent co-movement between industrial GDP growth and the growth of the formal manufacturing sector (GVA-ASI). However, these two metrics diverged during the three-year period between 2016-17 and 2018-19. While industrial credit slowed and GVA-ASI showed an expected downturn, industrial GDP remained puzzlingly constant. This decoupling represents a significant anomaly.

The historical relationship between industrial credit and industrial growth has been remarkably consistent. Over the last four decades (1981-2024), the correlation between industrial credit and ASI-GVA growth stood at 0.45. In more recent decades, this bond has only tightened: rising to 0.56 between 2000 and 2024, and 0.63 since 2004. Most notably, in the pre-pandemic window (2004-2020), the correlation reached a striking 0.82. So, under normal economic conditions, bank credit and industrial output move almost in lockstep. It is against this backdrop of long-term stability that the 2016-2019 decoupling becomes so significant. This pattern provides some credence to an overestimation of industrial GDP in the current NAS series (2011-12), as has been argued by some economists. The team working on the new revision may take note of this, especially in light of the IMF downgrading India's GDP estimates to 'C' status. The causes of the decline in industrial credit growth in the last decade require a deeper probe.

The writer teaches at the School of Liberal Arts and Humanities, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat. The comments by Professor R. Nagaraj and Prof. A. Kalaiyarasan are acknowledged.

Notable divergence

The data for the charts were sourced from Basic Statistical returns published by the Reserve Bank of India and EPWRF (Banking sector statistics)

CHART 1: Sectoral credit deployment as a share of total credit since 1973. Figures in %

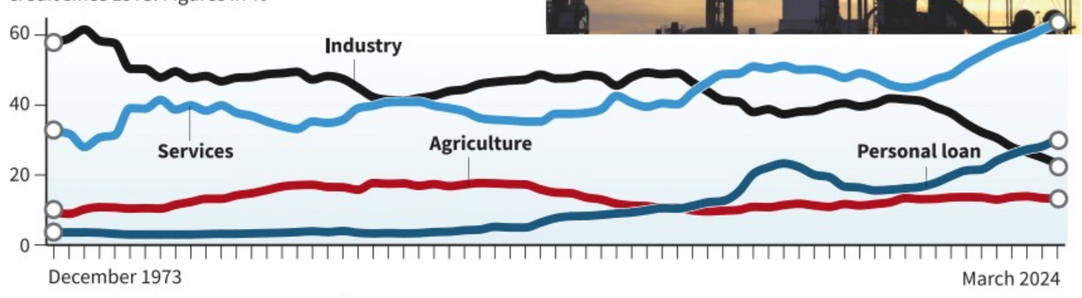


CHART 2: Industrial Credit growth (CAGR): all-India and six banking regions

CHART 2A:

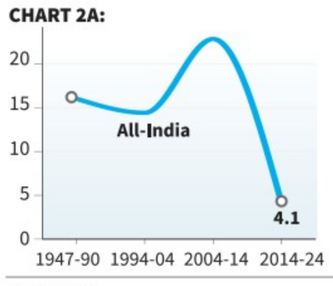


CHART 2B:

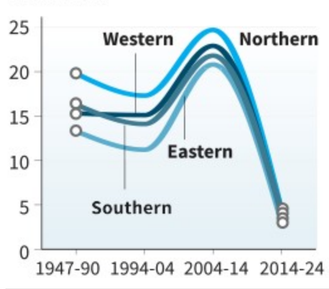


CHART 2C:

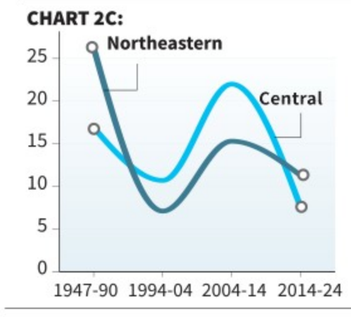


CHART 3: Annual growth (Nominal): industrial credit, ASI-GVA, and Industrial GDP

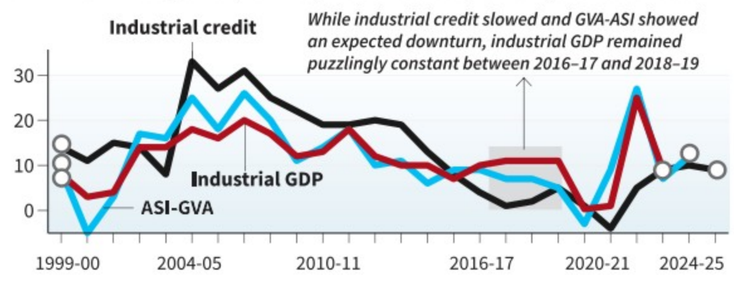


CHART 4: Bank Credit growth (CAGR) across industry groups

	2004-14	2014-24
1. Mining and quarrying	18.2	3.5
2. Food manufacturing and processing	20.9	6.9
3. Beverages and tobacco	17.6	5.5
4. Textiles	17.9	3
5. Paper, products and printing	18.1	4.3
6. Wood and wood products*	16.3	6.9
7. Leather and leather products	12.4	3
8. Gems and jewellery*	24.7	1.2
10. Chemical and products	15.9	5.3
11. Petroleum, coal products and nuclear fuel	26.9	3.4
12. Manufacturing of cement and cement products	22.8	1.8
13. Basic metals and metal products	25.9	0.6
14. Engineering	19.2	3.7
15. Vehicles, vehicle parts and transport equipment	18.8	3.4
16. Other industries	11.4	6.9
17. Electricity, gas and water	29	5.8
18. Construction	32.5	4
9+19. Rubber and plastic products	17.8	8.3

*CAGR computed for 2009-14 when written under column 2004-14

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 30, 1975

Correctional methods: Value of probation

Madras, Dec. 29: Mr. V.R. Krishna Iyer, Judge of the Supreme Court, to-day said that awarding jail sentence to an offender should be the last thing and the best alternative was probation. The fewer the persons sent to prison the better for the country, he said.

Addressing a gathering of Probation Officers, Magistrates, Police officials and social workers under the auspices of the Tamil Nadu Probation and Correctional Association at the Police Commissioner's office, Egmore, he said everyone interested in the penology of the country should accept as the foundation three things. They were: that every man was born good and only due to provocation and circumstances one lapsed into crime; that "once a criminal always a criminal" was absolutely wrong; and that if the society had made a person a criminal it was the obligation of the same society to reform him into the path of virtue.

Mr. Krishna Iyer felt that the Probation Act had not been taken serious note of in the country and there was more reliance on the penal code. This pointed to the need for deeper understanding of the philosophy and techniques of probation and to educate all those concerned in the administration of criminal justice. Even the judges had to be educated. "It is time that colleges for judges are started in the country," he said and added that in the U.S. a few such colleges existed.

Mr. Ramaprasada Rao, Judge of the Madras High Court, who presided said in the field of administration of criminal justice the probation officers provided the necessary guidelines to the judicial mind in sentencing the criminal.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DECEMBER 30, 1925

Broadcasting

Leafield (Oxford), Dec. 30: A notable feature of the New Year Eve's celebrations will be the exchange of greetings between the old world and the new. This has been arranged by the Radio Corporation of America and the British Broadcasting Company. As midnight approaches, messages of goodwill will be broadcasted from this country to America and will be relayed throughout the United States. America will reply with greetings which will be broadcasted from all stations in the British Isles.

From Page One

Top court pauses its judgment on Aravallis

The restrictive definition upheld by the top court in November had sparked a public furore across the four Aravalli States of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Delhi, with environmentalists and activists voicing concerns that the shrinking of protection would open the doors for unbridled mining in the hill ranges, which act as a green barrier against the eastward expansion of the Thar desert, and worsen pollution in cities such as Delhi.

The proposed panel would also hold a multi-temporal evaluation of the short-term and long-term environmental impacts resulting from the implementation of the recommended definition and its associated directions.

The Bench said several critical issues needed further clarification, including "whether the restrictive demarcation has inversely broadened the scope of 'non-Aravalli' areas, thereby facilitating the continuation of unregulated mining and other disruptive activities in terrains that are ecologically contiguous but technically excluded by this definition". The court indicated that the definition of the Aravalli range must be arrived at only after exhaustive scientific and geological estimations, and precise measurements of all the hills and hillocks.

The definition of the Aravallis, the court underscored, must be more nuanced and and measured to maintain the "ecological integrity of the entire range". The court listed the *suo motu* case on January 21.

SC stays suspension of sentence of former MLA

The Supreme Court, in its order on Monday, noted that it usually did not interfere with an order of bail. However, the Unnao case revolved around a set of "unique facts and circumstances", including the fact that Sengar was separately found guilty of the custodial death of the survivor's father.

The court noted that Sengar has sought bail in the custodial death case, and the court concerned has already reserved the case to pass orders - indicating that, if granted bail, he would be released from custody.

"Keeping in mind these peculiar circumstances, we deem it appropriate to stay the operation of the November 23, 2025 order (of suspension of sentence and bail in the Unnao case) passed by the High Court," the Bench directed.

It emphasised that the survivor could separately approach the apex court as part of her statutory rights. She would be provided free legal aid if required.

The court scheduled the case for hearing on January 20.

Ernakulam Express fire kills one, 150 evacuated

The Divisional Railway Manager, Vijayawada, handed over ₹50,000 as *ex gratia* to the daughter of the deceased.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, in a message on social media platform X, said the loss of life was unfortunate, and offered condolences to the bereaved family. He commended the Yelamanchili police and the Fire Department for the evacuation of more than 150 passengers. Mr. Naidu appreciated the Railway Police Force and the railway staff for separating the front and rear coaches, preventing further damage.

Forensic teams collect evidence

Forensic teams from Visakhapatnam and Mangalagiri have been deployed to collect evidence. The fire alarm system in the coach activated upon detection of smoke/fire, railway sources said.

The coach mechanic and bed-roll staff, along with the travelling ticket examiner, alerted passengers and utilised the fire extinguishers available in the coach to prevent the spread of the fire, the sources added.

IIP growth climbs to 25-month high of 6.7%

Ms. Nayar said that despite the demand boost following GST rate rationalisation in September, IIP growth averaged 3.6% during the October-November period, lower than the 4.3% expansion seen in the July-September quarter. The infrastructure and construction sectors grew at 12.1% in November, the fastest since October 2023, and also on a strong base of 8% recorded in November last year.

Buoyed by strong performances in manufacturing and construction sectors, the capital goods sector recorded an 11-month-high growth of 10.4% in November.

Mining output growth accelerated to a three-month high of 5.4% in November, following two months of contractions. The electricity sector was the only one to contract, declining by 1.5% in November, down from a growth of 4.4% in November last year.

Consumer durables and consumer non-durables sectors rebounded in November, growing 10.3% and 7.3%, respectively. This marked a 12-month and 25-month high for the two sectors, respectively.

Tripura student's killing a horrific hate crime: Rahul

Congress leader says incident a result of the ruling BJP 'normalising' hate; there is a dire need to raise awareness of history, culture, languages, and literature of the Northeast, says Gogoi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Monday called the killing of a Tripura student in Dehradun a "horrific hate crime" and a result of the ruling BJP "normalising" hate.

The Congress also questioned the "unusual delay" in the registration of a first information report and demanded immediate arrest of the main accused.

Anjel Chakma, 24, from Nandannagar in West Tripura district, was attacked by a group of six persons when he objected to an alleged racial slur in Dehradun on December 9. He died of injuries in a hospital on December 26.

In a post on X, Mr. Gandhi said: "Hate doesn't appear overnight. For years now, it is being fed daily – especially to our youth – through toxic content and irresponsible narratives. And it is being normalised by the hate-spewing leadership of the ruling BJP."

Mr. Gandhi said India was built on respect and unity, not fear and abuse.

Collective outrage: People stage a march demanding justice for Anjel Chakma and protesting discrimination against people from Northeast India, in Agartala on Monday. PTI

"We are a country of love and diversity. We must not become a dead society that looks away while fellow Indians are targeted. We must reflect and confront what we are allowing our country to become," he said.

"My thoughts are with the Chakma family and the people of Tripura and the Northeast. We are proud to call you our fellow Indian brothers and sisters," Mr. Gandhi added.

Later in the day, Congress Deputy Leader in the Lok Sabha and Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi addressed a press conference and said the case must be investigated in a time-bound manner and the guilty must be given the harshest punishment to convey a message across the country that there was zero tolerance for such crimes. There was a dire need to raise awareness about history, culture, languages, and literature of the Northeast. He said Unakoti in Tripura, the place Anjel Chakma came from, had some of the ancient Siva temples.

"I am an Indian. I am not Chinese. The people of Northeast are Indians. The people of Northeast are not Chinese," he said.

Mr. Gogoi said that while Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke of "Act East" policy, his own party's government in Uttarakhand was yet to order an inquiry into why there was a delay in registering the FIR in the case.

The FIR was registered 12 days after the incident, Mr. Gogoi said, giving ample time for the main accused to flee.

Shift 'murder trial' out of Uttarakhand, tribal body tells CM

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

The All India Chakma Students' Union (AICSU) has urged Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami to shift the "racially motivated" Anjel Chakma murder trial out of the State.

A 24-year-old MBA student from Tripura, Chakma was stabbed by a group of allegedly inebriated persons in Dehradun on December 9. He died at a hospital in the Uttarakhand capital on December 26.

AICSU president Drishyamuni Chakma said on Monday that the union wrote to the Chief Minister demanding the transfer of the case, preferably to Delhi, as the family of the deceased "has lost faith in the Uttarakhand police". He also suggested that the case be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The lapses include a three-day delay in registering the first information report (FIR), the refusal by the Selakui police station personnel to register the complaint on multiple occasions, the failure of the police to invoke appropriate Sections of the law at the initial stage, and attempts by senior police officials to dilute the crime by portraying it as a fight while ignoring elements of racial abuse.

The AICSU also raised grave concerns regarding lapses by the hospital authorities, noting that the victim was admitted in a critical condition to a private hospital, which did not inform the police immediately, as required in a medico-legal case.

Dhami calls boy's father

Mr. Dhami on Monday spoke to Tarun Prasad Chakma, the father of the student, on phone and assured strict punishment to the accused, officials said.

The Chief Minister said he was saddened by the incident and that the State government stood with the victim's family.

Mr. Dhami said that children from India and abroad visited Uttarakhand to study, and such an environment had never existed in the State earlier. He told Mr. Chakma that five accused had been arrested in connection with the incident, while another accused is suspected to have fled to Nepal, and efforts were being made to arrest him by declaring a reward. (*With PTI inputs*)

No let-up in harassment of Kashmiri shawl sellers in Himachal Pradesh: JKSA

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

There has been no let-up in incidents of harassment, assault, and threats against Kashmiri shawl sellers in Himachal Pradesh, the Jammu and Kashmir Students Association (JKSA), which is in touch with authorities and victims, said on Monday. Political parties in the Kashmir Valley too expressed concern over the "growing incidents".

"Dozens of Kashmiri shawl sellers, who have been working in Himachal Pradesh for over 25-30 years, are now being harassed, assaulted, and threatened to leave the State in the Ghumarwin area of Bilaspur district by right-wing groups. This is the 17th such incident that occurred in Himachal Pradesh this year," JKSA head Nasir Khuehami said.

The student body noted this is the 17th incident that took place in Himachal Pradesh in 2025

The JKSA urged the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, and the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, "to intervene immediately".

The JKSA, which has been documenting the cases of harassment against Kashmiris, said shawl sellers were being asked to leave Himachal Pradesh. "They are not allowed to sell their shawls, their belongings have been vandalised, and even their mobile phones were smashed when they tried to record these incidents," Mr. Khuehami said. He said the incidents were taking place "despite having proper verification and valid documents".

"We further urge the Union Home Minister to take immediate and decisive action by directing the authorities to register cases against the fringe and right-wing elements involved under the relevant provisions of law," the JKSA said.

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president Tariq Hamid Karra said he spoke to Mr. Sukhu and raised the issue of the harassment of Kashmiri shawl sellers. "He [the Chief Minister] assured of strict action," Mr. Karra said. The National Conference, Peoples Democratic Party, and the J&K Peoples Conference also expressed concern over such attacks on Kashmiri shawl sellers.

2 Kashmiri vendors face harassment in Haryana; FIR filed

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

Two Kashmiri vendors were allegedly harassed and threatened with dire consequences in separate incidents in Haryana over the past two days. A first information report (FIR) has been registered in one of the incidents.

Peoples Democratic Party leader Iltija Mufti posted a video from Kaithal on her X account, urging Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Saini and the Director-General of Police to take cognisance of the incident. "A Kashmiri shawl vendor is yet again harassed, abused and heckled in Haryana. You abuse and misbehave with Kashmiris and then conveniently dub them as 'anti-nationals' all in the same breath. Are we subhuman?" read the accompanying post.

In the video, a man speaking in Haryanvi dialect can be heard confronting the vendor sitting on a concrete bench, asking him to chant "Vande Mataram". The man, yet to be identified, talks about the atrocities against Hindus in Bangladesh and asks the vendor to leave immediately, threatening to set him ablaze.

Superintendent of Police, Kaithal, Upasana told *The Hindu* over phone that the police took *suo motu* cognisance of the matter and registered a case two days ago. Efforts were on to identify the accused, who was not seen in the video.

In a similar incident, another video shows a man in Fatehabad grabbing a Kashmiri vendor by the collar and forcing him to chant "Bharat Mata Ki Jai".

Fatehabad SP Siddhant Jain said both the vendor and the man were brought to the police station, and the man was "counselled".

India rejects Pakistan's remarks on minorities

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India on Monday said Pakistan's "horrific and systemic victimisation" of minorities of various faiths was a well-established fact and no amount of "finger-pointing" would "obfuscate" it. New Delhi said this while strongly trashing Pakistan's comments on the condition of minorities in India.

"We reject the reported remarks from a country whose abysmal record on this front speaks for itself," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

In Islamabad, Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi, responding to media queries on alleged vandalism during Christmas celebrations in some places in India, said "persecution of minorities in India is a matter of deep concern".

Centre is committed to saving Aravalli hills: Minister

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav on Monday welcomed the Supreme Court order on the Aravalli issue and reiterated the government's commitment to saving the hill range.

"I welcome the Supreme Court directions introducing a stay on its order concerning the Aravalli range, and the formation of a new committee to study issues," said Mr. Yadav in a post on social media platform X.

"As things stand, a complete ban on mining stays with regards to new mining leases or renewal of old mining leases," he said.

Top court order a temporary relief, fight will continue, says Unnao rape survivor's lawyer

Alisha Dutta
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court order should not be treated as a victory but should be seen as a temporary relief, Mehmood Pracha, the lawyer of the Unnao rape survivor, said on Monday.

Earlier, the top court stayed the Delhi High Court order suspending former BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar's prison sentence and granting him bail in the case.

"She [the survivor] kept asking me if she will be safe after Delhi High Court's order, now at least I can assure her that the Supreme Court has granted her a temporary relief. The fight will continue," Mr. Pracha said. The survivor and her family members, along with activists, have been protesting against the Delhi High Court order for the past seven days.

Activist Yogita Bhayana, who has been protesting alongside the survivor, expressed gratitude to the top court. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Yogita Bhayana, founder of Pari, who has been protesting alongside the survivor, said the Supreme Court had restored her faith in the judiciary. "We had protested when the Congress government was in power and will continue to protest for her safety during the BJP rule as well," she said.

Sengar's daughter, Ishita, took to X to pen an open letter in opposition to the Supreme Court order, calling it a reaction to the public outrage. "If pressure and public frenzy begin to overshadow evidence and due process, what protection does an ordinary citizen truly have?" she wrote.

"Please let the law speak without fear. Please let evidence be examined without pressure. Please let truth be treated as truth even when it is unpopular," her post read.

Congress welcomes Supreme Court order

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Congress women's wing chief Alka Lamba on Monday welcomed the Supreme Court's order.

"It is a big thing that the Supreme Court has overturned the High Court's decision and made it clear that Kuldeep Singh Sengar will not be allowed to come out, he will stay in jail. This is a victory for the survivor, her family and all who supported them," Ms. Lamba said.

Shah says BJP has resolved to evict all infiltrators from India

Accusing Congress of using them as vote bank, Home Minister says infiltrators are a threat to national security and Assam culture; State experienced a 'golden period' under the BJP, he says, appealing to people to give the party five more years

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday that the Bharatiya Janata Party had resolved to eject the "Congress-encouraged infiltrators" from poll-bound Assam and the rest of the country.

His statement, made during an event in Nagaon district of central Assam, was reminiscent of what Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at a political rally in West Bengal before he became the Prime Minister in 2014. The Union Minister was addressing a gathering after inaugurating the ₹227 crore redeveloped Batadrava Than, the birthplace of 15th-16th century Vaishnavite saint-reformer Srimanta Sankaradeva.

"I want to declare from this sacred land the BJP's goal is to drive out every single infiltrator from across the country, not just from Assam," Mr. Shah said.

Opening day: Union Home Minister Amit Shah arriving to inaugurate the newly constructed Batadrava cultural project in Nagaon district of Assam on Monday. PTI

Appealing to the people of Assam to give five more years to the BJP to achieve its goal, he said "*ghuspethiye*" (infiltrators) were a major threat to national security and Assam's culture. Elections to the 126-member Assam Assembly are due in less than six months.

Mr. Shah lauded the Assam government led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for evicting "Bangladeshi infiltrators" from 1.29 lakh bighas of land, including the areas around the Batadrava Than and the Kaziranga National Park.

'Affect culture'

The infiltrators were emboldened to grab land because the Congress used them as a vote bank, he said. "Such encouragement affected Assam's culture and literature," Mr. Shah added, slamming the Congress for coming up with the now-defunct Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act in 1983 to let Bangladeshi culture dominate the State.

Assam had experienced a "golden period" under the BJP since 2016, Mr. Shah said. He compared Mr. Modi's visits to the State in the past 11 years with the preceding 10 years when the late Manmohan Singh was in power. "Modi*ji* visited Assam 36 times while Manmohan Singh*ji* visited seven times, despite representing Assam in the Rajya Sabha, and two of those visits were to cast his vote," Mr. Shah said.

The Home Minister underscored the progress Assam has made.

"In Delhi, Assam was once known as a State riddled with problems, but industrialists I met in Gujarat on Sunday told me that it is now contributing to the country's development," he said.

"Agitations used to rule Assam for years. Youth carried AK-47 rifles, and there was bloodshed. The Centre under Modi*ji* signed five peace accords, and 92% of their clauses have been implemented. We will ensure 100% implementation if the BJP is elected to power again," Mr. Shah said.

NCP, NCP(SP) to contest Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad civic polls together: Rohit

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

A day after the Ajit Pawar faction of the Nationalist Congress Party joined hands with the NCP-Sharadchandra Pawar (NCP-SP) for the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation election, NCP(SP) MLA Rohit Pawar on Monday announced the two parties had allied for the Pune Municipal Corporation election.

Mr. Rohit confirmed that both NCPs have allied for the PCMC and PMC elections. "After discussions, party workers who are contesting said that uniting with Ajit Pawar would be right," he said.

Ending speculation, the NCP(SP) announced it would reunite with its rival, breakaway faction, which is part of the ruling Mahayuti alliance in Maharashtra. On Sunday, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar also spoke of the "*parivaar* (family) coming together" for the PCMC elections.

Both moves add up to a huge political shift following the split in 2023. For the first time since the split, the parties led by Mr. Sharad and Mr. Ajit will contest together for elections to the two municipal corporations.

Poll ties: Elections to 29 municipal corporations in Maharashtra will be held on January 15. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Both parties would compete on their respective symbols, Mr. Rohit said. "The decisions were made with the consent of party workers, and Mr. Sharad has no involvement in the alliance talks," he added.

Meanwhile, NCP(SP) allies, the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Congress, will contest the PMC election, competing against the two NCP factions, the BJP and the Shiv Sena. "The Shiv Sena (UBT) will issue Form A and Form B for 45 seats, while the Congress will do it for 60 seats in the first phase. The rest of the seats will be discussed and finalised by Saturday," Congress leader Satej Patil announced on Monday.

Seat-sharing discussions for 21 seats are in the final stage with the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), and will be finalised on Tuesday, he said. The Congress's alliance with the MNS in the PMC election is in contrast to the stand taken by the Mumbai unit, which has been reluctant to align with the MNS citing ideological differences.

Elections to 29 municipal corporations will be held on January 15.

Why only 1.9% retired soldiers get govt. jobs, ask panel members

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Members of the Standing Committee on Defence, which includes Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, asked at a meeting on Monday why only 1.9% of former members of the armed forces are absorbed into government jobs when there is a provision to hire at least 10%-25% of them.

The committee, headed by BJP leader Radha Mohan Singh, was convened to review "resettlement policies, healthcare facilities and other avenues for ex-servicemen".

Mr. Gandhi and other members flagged various challenges faced by former armed forces members, noting that many find it difficult to get treatment at military hospitals. According to sources, he said that when they are referred to private hospitals, they often face major problems, as several hospitals refuse them treatment citing unpaid government dues.

Mr. Gandhi said they were entitled to receive only ₹75,000 for cancer and kidney failure treatment, which is grossly inadequate. He suggested that this limit should be increased, sources said.

Some members also said that public sector undertakings should recruit former armed forces members, as around 60,000 soldiers retire every year. Rehabilitation is not being ensured, they said.

Cong. urges Modi to take action to prevent violence against Christians

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressing "profound dismay" over what he described as an "alarming surge in violence and intimidation" against India's Christian community during the Christmas season.

Mr. Venugopal alleged that these attacks represented a "brazen assault" on constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and equality.

In his letter, Mr. Venugopal cited a series of incidents across States including Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and even Kerala. He claimed that mobs affiliated with right-wing outfits disrupted Christmas celebrations, attacked churches, and harassed worshippers.

> The silence from the Prime Minister and that of the government emboldened the hate mongers and seems to be an open invitation for them to rage violence against the minorities. This is unacceptable
>
> **K.C. VENUGOPAL**
> Congress leader

Among the incidents highlighted were verbal assaults on women and children wearing Santa hats in Lajpat Nagar of Delhi, attacks on churches and Christian homes in Kanker village of Chhattisgarh, and vandalism at Magneto Mall in Raipur where Christmas decorations were destroyed.

In Madhya Pradesh, a prayer meeting in Jabalpur attended by hearing- and visually-challenged children was allegedly stormed by a mob, while in Uttar Pradesh, a Christmas eve service in Ghaziabad was disrupted.

Mr. Venugopal also pointed to an attack on children participating in a carol procession in Palakkad district of Kerala.

'Scars on India'

"These are not isolated incidents but scars on the core idea of India," Mr. Venugopal wrote, accusing the government of "silence" that he said emboldens hate-mongers.

He urged the Prime Minister to take "immediate and decisive action" to prevent further violence and ensure citizens can practise their faith without fear.

The Congress leader also warned of potential disruptions during upcoming New Year celebrations, calling for "utmost precautions" to safeguard pluralism and public safety.

President Droupadi Murmu during the 22nd Santali Parsi Maha and centenary celebrations of Ol Chiki script in Jamshedpur. PTI

Literary exchanges enrich languages and communities: Murmu

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Language and literature bind communities, President Droupadi Murmu said on Monday at the closing ceremony of the 22nd Santhali 'Parsi Maha' (language day) and centenary celebrations of the Ol Chiki script of the Santhali language.

Speaking at the event in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, the President said that although the Santhals had a distinct language, literature, and culture, the Santhali language lacked its own script until a century ago, leading to the use of scripts such as Roman, Devanagari, Odia, and Bengali.

"With these scripts, many Santhali words could not be pronounced correctly. In 1925, Pandit Raghunath Murmu created the Ol Chiki script. Since then, this script has become a powerful symbol of Santhal identity," Ms. Murmu said on the second day of her visit to Jharkhand.

The President further said she got an opportunity to release the Constitution of India in Santhali language, written in the Ol Chiki script, on the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee on December 25.

Underlining the importance of learning one's mother tongue, she said learning Santhali in the Ol Chiki script was vital for the overall development of the Santhal community.

"Language and literature bind communities together. Literary exchanges between different languages enrich those languages and communities. Translations make this exchange possible. Therefore, there is a need to introduce students of the Santhali language to other languages. Similar efforts should be made to make Santhali literature accessible to students of other languages," Ms. Murmu said.

Jharkhand Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar and Chief Minister Hemant Soren also participated in the event. Mr. Soren said his government was committed to giving recognition to tribal languages and culture and efforts in this direction were being continuously made.

Fake demand under MGNREGA won't be entertained: govt.

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

The Rural Development Ministry informed the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Monday that it was coordinating with the State governments to ensure that no "fake demand" was raised under the MGNREGA during the interim period before the implementation of VB - G RAM G Act.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has been replaced by the Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB - G RAM G) Act, 2025.

The committee on Rural Development, headed by Congress leader Saptagiri Ulaka, held its first meeting on Monday after the repeal of the MGNREGA by Parliament on December 18.

Transition period

During the meeting, sources said, Samajwadi Party MP Ramashankar Rajbhar asked the Ministry to explain how it planned to tackle demand during the transition period when the new law was implemented and the MGNREGA was phased out.

Since the MGNREGA was a demand-driven scheme, he pointed out, the government could not artificially suppress this demand. In response, Ministry officials reportedly said they were coordinating with the States to ensure that no "fake demand" was raised. Mr. Ulaka and other members questioned the government on how it planned to distinguish between genuine and fake demand.

The MGNREGA has been replaced by the Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act. FILE PHOTO

The meeting, which lasted nearly two hours, saw several BJP members criticising the MGNREGA. According to sources, several BJP members detailed various welfare schemes run by both the Centre and the States that provide "free health and free food," arguing that in such a scenario, a rural employment scheme became redundant. Other BJP MPs, the sources said, flagged corruption cases affecting the rural employment scheme.

Dues to West Bengal

The government also informed the panel that it was in touch with the West Bengal government and would clear the dues it owed to the State. However, neither the amount owed nor the timeline for release was shared. Trinamool Congress members had staged an overnight dharna in Parliament after the VB - G RAM G Bill was passed past midnight in the Rajya Sabha.

The release of funds to West Bengal under the scheme was stopped in March 2022 by the Centre, invoking provisions of Section 27 of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, owing to continued non-compliance with the Central government directives by the State.

The Union government owes ₹3,082.52 crore to States, of which ₹1,457.22 crore was wages for completed work by registered workers.

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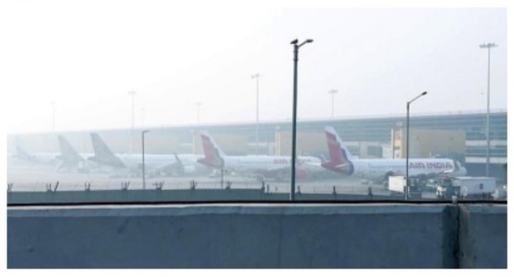
INBRIEF



Dense fog disrupts flight services at Delhi airport

At least 128 flights were cancelled, eight diverted, and nearly 470 services delayed at the Delhi airport due to dense fog on Monday. An official said 64 departures and 64 arrivals were cancelled, while eight flights were diverted due to dense fog and low visibility conditions at the Delhi airport. Information on the flight-tracking website Flightradar24.com showed that nearly 470 flights were delayed. Delhi airport operator DIAL, in a post on X at 2 p.m., said flight operations were running smoothly as runway visibility had improved. "However, some flight departures or arrivals for certain destinations may be impacted," it said. PTI

ED conducts raids in Delhi, Haryana in extortion case

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has conducted searches at 10 locations in Delhi and Haryana's Gurugram and Rohtak in connection with a case involving extortion and coercive settlement of loans taken from private financiers, the agency said on Monday. The alleged money laundering case is related to Inderjit Singh Yadav, his accomplices, Apollo Green Energy Limited, and other associated entities and persons. The ED initiated investigations based on more than 15 First Information Reports and chargesheets filed by the police in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh . "Inderjit Singh Yadav is currently absconding and operating from the United Arab Emirates," the agency said.

DAC gives its nod for defence purchases worth ₹79,000 cr.

Committee accorded approval for the Army's proposal for radars and guided rocket ammunition, Navy's request for tugs and high frequency radio, and Air Force's proposal for missiles, simulators

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, on Monday accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for capital acquisition proposals amounting to about ₹79,000 crore from the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

According to the Ministry of Defence, the DAC approved the procurement of Loiter Munition Systems for Artillery Regiments, Low Level Light Weight Radars, Long Range Guided Rocket Ammunition for the Pinaka Multiple Launch Rocket System (MRLS), and Integrated Drone Detection and Interdiction System (IDD&IS) Mk-II for the Indian Army.

The Loiter Munition Systems will enable precision strikes against tactical targets, while the Low Level Light Weight Radars will enhance detection and tracking of small, low-flying unmanned aerial systems. The Long Range Guided Rockets will significantly improve the range and accuracy of the Pinaka MRLS, enabling effective engagement of high-value targets.

Joint synergy: The ₹79,000-crore package is aimed at boosting the operational capabilities of the three Services. FILE PHOTO

The IDD&IS Mk-II, with enhanced range, will strengthen the protection of vital assets in tactical battle areas and the hinterland, the Defence Ministry said.

For the Indian Navy, the AoN was accorded for the procurement of Bollard Pull (BP) Tugs, High Frequency Software Defined Radio (HF SDR) Manpack systems, and the leasing of High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS).

The BP Tugs will assist naval ships and submarines during berthing, unberthing and manoeuvring in confined harbour waters. The HF SDR Manpack will enhance long-range secure communications during boarding and landing operations, while the HALE RPAS will provide persistent intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and strengthen maritime domain awareness across the Indian Ocean Region.

For the Indian Air Force, the DAC approved the AoN for procurement of the Automatic Take-off and Landing Recording System, Astra Mk-II beyond-visual-range air-to-air missiles, Full Mission Simulators, and SPICE-1000 long-range guidance kits. The Automatic Take-off and Landing Recording System will enhance aerospace safety by enabling high-definition, all-weather automatic recording of take-off and landing phases. Astra Mk-II missiles, with enhanced range, will boost the capability of IAF fighter aircraft to engage adversary targets from extended distances.

The Full Mission Simulator for the Light Combat Aircraft Tejas will strengthen pilot training in a cost-effective and safe environment, while SPICE-1000 kits will enhance the IAF's long-range precision strike capability.

DRDO tests Pinaka rocket

NEW DELHI
The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Monday successfully conducted the maiden flight test of the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket (LRGR–120) at the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur.
The Defence Ministry said that the test marked a major milestone in India's indigenous rocket artillery programme.

Union govt. gearing up to host mega AI summit in February

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

The Union government is proceeding with the AI Impact Summit's organisation at a scale comparable to the G-20 Summit in 2023, according to estimated participation numbers and the number of "pre-summit" events under way and planned. This event is set to see participation from 15 to 20 heads of state. Around 1,00,000 participants were expected for the main event in February, IT Secretary S. Krishnan said at a news briefing on Monday.

While Mr. Krishnan did not refer to the G-20, he outlined that the annual AI summits – a multilateral set-up which began from Bletchley Park in the U.K. in 2023 to Seoul the following year and Paris in 2025 (where India was handed the reins for 2026) – have seen increasing participation. Officials have been keen to position India better on the world stage on AI-related issues, with a bevy of pre-summit events in India and abroad.

"In the initial summit, we had about 27 countries which participated, including India, and eventually 28 countries signed the declaration in Bletchley Park.

AI IMPACT SUMMIT भारत 2026 INDIA
सर्वजन हिताय | सर्वजन सुखाय
WELFARE FOR ALL | HAPPINESS OF ALL

Nearly 20 heads of state will participate in the event.

By the time we came to France, there were more than 100 countries participating in various forms," Mr. Krishnan said.

The event will also have top researchers and business leaders from AI firms, including Anthropic and Google Deepmind, with tentative confirmations from other leading players.

"And we expect that number to get better in February, because there's been a greater and greater interest as we go along," Mr. Krishnan said. Several new countries that are part of the Global South would join this edition, he added.

The event is set to deliberate upon multiple themes, including AI and its impact on work, trust and safety protocols for AI models, and using AI in specific industries.

Indian Navy's stitched sailing vessel *INSV Kaundinya* sets off for Oman

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The *INSV Kaundinya*, the Indian Navy's indigenously built traditional stitched sailing vessel, sailed on her maiden overseas voyage from Porbandar, Gujarat, to Muscat in the Sultanate of Oman on Monday.

The Navy said that the historic expedition marks a significant milestone in India's endeavour to revive, understand and celebrate its ancient maritime heritage.

Maiden Voyage: *INSV Kaundinya*, the Indian Navy's stitched sailing vessel, embarks on its voyage to Muscat, Oman. PTI

The vessel was formally flagged off by Vice-Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, in the presence of Issa Saleh Al Shibani, Oman's Ambassador to India, along with senior officers of the Indian Navy and distinguished guests.

The Navy further informed that *INSV Kaundinya* has been constructed using traditional stitched shipbuilding techniques, employing natural materials and methods that date back centuries. Drawing inspiration from historical sources, the vessel reflects India's rich legacy of indigenous shipbuilding, seamanship and oceanic navigation. The voyage retraces ancient maritime routes that once connected India's western coast with Oman, fostering trade, cultural exchange and sustained civilisational interactions across the Indian Ocean, it said.

The expedition is expected to further strengthen bilateral relations between India and Oman by reinforcing shared maritime heritage and deepening cultural ties. It also highlights the deep historical linkages between Gujarat and Oman, underscoring a legacy of cooperation that continues to this day, it said.

Commander Vikas Sheoran is the skipper of the vessel, while Commander Y. Hemant Kumar, is the Officer-in-Charge of the expedition. The crew comprises four officers and 13 naval sailors.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent his best wishes to the crew. "Wonderful to see that INSV Kaundinya is embarking on her maiden voyage from Porbandar to Muscat, Oman... My best wishes to the crew for a safe and memorable journey, as they retrace our historic links with the Gulf region and beyond," he said in a post on X.

Opposition condemns harassment of Japanese tourists over attire in U.P.

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

A viral video showing a group of Japanese tourists allegedly facing harassment over their attire at the Dashashwamedh Ghat in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, drew sharp reactions on social media, prompting a broader conversation on hospitality towards foreign visitors.

The incident reportedly took place on December 25, when the group of tourists, wearing Santa hats and red swimwear, were preparing to bathe in the Ganga. Some local people objected to their attire and "behaviour", accusing them of disrespecting the sanctity of the river. One of them allegedly urinated in the river.

"In this incident, the Japanese tourists were confronted by other visitors about an inappropriate act while bathing, after which the tourists apologised and the dispute was resolved. No physical violence or assault occurred," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Kashi Zone, in a statement on Monday. No formal complaint has been recorded over the incident.

Social media users and Opposition parties targeted the government and the 'anti-social elements' involved in the incident.

"Varanasi represents a pluralistic identity and is a major tourist centre where people from across the world visit. Such an incident as the harassment of Japanese nationals will damage the reputation of our spiritual centre. The government and administration must seriously look into the matter and protect the cultural distinctiveness of the city," said Juhi Singh, national spokesperson, Samajwadi Party (SP).

'Never occurred before'
Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Rai said such incidents had never occurred before in Varanasi. "Such incidents never happened in Varanasi. Locals respect international visitors as Kashi is India's spiritual capital. But, since the BJP came to power, a kind of intolerance and bullying attitude is visible among their supporters. We condemn any kind of harassment of any person," Mr. Rai said.

Lalit Modi issues apology over remark in viral video

Press Trust of India
LONDON

Indian Premier League (IPL) founder Lalit Modi on Monday apologised for calling himself and Vijay Mallya the "two biggest fugitives" of India in a video posted on social media and said that his statement was "misconstrued".

In the now-deleted video from Mr. Mallya's 70th birthday celebrations in London, Mr. Modi joked about the pair's status as the "two biggest fugitives" of India.

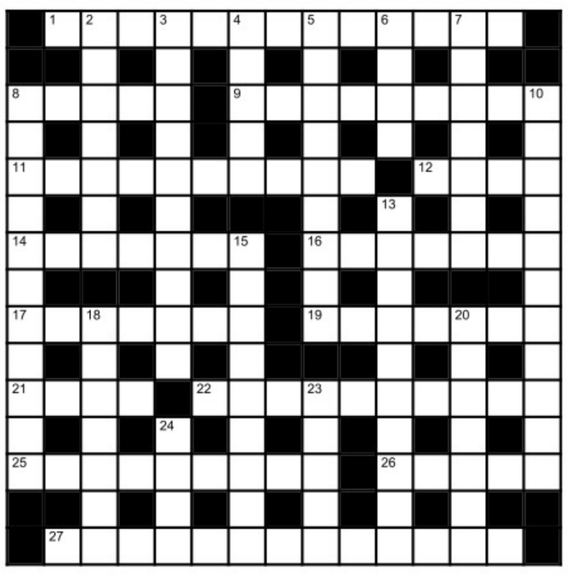
Mr. Modi said in an X post, "I apologise if I have hurt anyone feelings, especially the Indian Government, whom I have the highest respect and regard for." "The statement was misconstrued and was never intended to be as played out," he added.

CROSSWORD + 14678

(set by Dr. X)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at *https://crossword.thehindu.com*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1/23 What chick will do to overcome shyness (4,3,2,4,5)
8 Old Mexican's worried, smuggling unknown drug (5)
9 European's murder on street right outside entrance to discotheque (9)
11 Promiscuous prince and single girl in old penthouse close to lake (10)
12 Part of Far East region (4)
14 Rather badly stained (7)
16 Entrap rogue ensnaring women in European city (7)
17 Managed to break reactionary party's dreams (7)
19 Rebellious guy, one with endless prejudice in African country (7)
21 Observes escort in retreat, going around yard (4)
22 Stanzas about a seedy French commune (10)
25 Teens excited about new show in American state (9)
26 Snap of farm alongside lake (5)
27 Slick red coat, pants - special attire for semi-formal wear (8,5)

Down

2 Ousted unexpectedly after leader of opposition excels (7)
3 Quality of old prison wall, not fine (10)
4 Exploiting posh leader of group concealing immorality (5)
5 Exercise excessively in public followed by shower (9)
6 Italian going topless in Middle Eastern country (4)
7 Back and butt, terribly sore (7)
8 Starts to apply perfume, powder and gel for date (11)
10 Reassessment of paper with liars suspiciously securing first-class (11)
13 Drive to pick up a little more liquor and good sweetmeat (4,6)
15 Awful male ignored dismay about a little spurious spirit giving indigestion (9)
18 Consumed fresh tea in pot after removing lid (3,4)
20 Crooks stifling the Spanish lady's screams (7)
23 See 1 Across
24 Caress back in work centre (4)

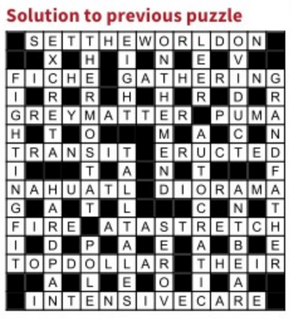
SUDOKU

	2			9			6	
1			3			9		2
	4	9						1
5	3	2		8				
		7				5		
				5		2	7	3
2						4	1	
7		6			5			9
	5			1			8	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

No.SS6746 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

7	8	1	5	6	9	4	2	3
3	9	2	7	1	4	6	5	8
4	6	5	2	3	8	9	1	7
2	7	6	1	4	3	8	9	5
9	3	4	8	5	6	2	7	1
5	1	8	9	2	7	3	6	4
1	2	3	6	8	5	7	4	9
6	4	7	3	9	1	5	8	2
8	5	9	4	7	2	1	3	6

FAITH

Prayer on Vaikunta Ekadasi

After meeting the socio-economic goals of one's family, one truly desires to be freed from the cycle of rebirth. This desire becomes a prayer, universally, on the day of Vaikunta Ekadasi, when devotees throng temples much ahead of daybreak. On this day, Vishnu Himself is said to open the portals of heaven to devotees, signifying His readiness to accept the surrender of a devotee, said Damal S. Ramakrishnan.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna says, "Having already given up dharmas as means to attain moksha, surrender yourself to Me. I will free you from all the sins, do not grieve." When He says '*mam*' and '*ekam*', Krishna says 'I am the means' and 'I am also the object of attainment.' One should give up the idea that one is a doer and one is reaping the benefit or fruit. A devotee must comprehend that everything is done by God alone. For the atonement of sins, our sastras prescribe prayaschittas, which require a lot of time and are difficult to execute in present-day life. Krishna says, "Give up the various prayaschittas and seek refuge in Me. I will stand in the place of the various expiation ceremonies, so that the hindrances to bhakti yoga are removed." One may wonder at the meaning of Krishna's saying, "I will liberate you from all your sins which stand in the way of your attaining moksha, so do not grieve." It means Krishna reassures devotees saying, "Do not be afraid that I will not grant you moksha, I will certainly grant you that." One need not be worried by sins one has committed as standing in the way of attaining moksha, as long as one surrenders to Him. Vaikunta Ekadasi is a reaffirmation of this to His devotees.

INBRIEF

Arvind Fashions set to buy Flipkart's 31.3% stake in unit

Arvind Fashions Ltd. on Monday said it will acquire Flipkart group's 31.25% stake in Arvind Youth Brands Pvt Ltd for ₹135 crore. Arvind Youth Brands Pvt. Ltd. (AYBPL) is currently engaged in the business of wholesale and retail of apparel and accessories under the brand name 'Flying Machine'. It had a turnover of ₹432.16 crore in the financial year ended March 31, 2025, the company said in a regulatory filing. PTI

RediffPay starts testing ahead of 'RediffPay' UPI introduction

Rediff.com India Ltd. said it has received the final approval from the National Payments Corporation of India for Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP) licence, paving the way for the rollout of its digital payments platform, RediffPay. With this approval, the company said it has commenced Closed User Group (CUG) testing—an essential step before entering the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) ecosystem.

WOG Technologies eyes ₹375 crore via fresh issue

WOG Technologies filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator, SEBI, to raise funds via an initial public offering comprising fresh issue of shares worth ₹375 crore. Also, there will be an offer-for-sale component of 43.28 lakh equity shares by promoters and existing shareholders, the draft red herring prospectus shows. Proceeds from the fresh issue will be used to meet working capital needs and buy balance 50% stake in Bell Cooling Towers, among others. PTI

Size of bank frauds rising but cases on decline: RBI report

During 2024-25, total number of frauds slid to 23,879 cases; however, the amount rose to ₹34,771 crore from ₹11,261 crore in 2023-24, as per RBI

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Report card: Profitability of scheduled commercial banks remained robust, said the RBI. REUTERS

Despite several safeguards and technology interventions, fraudsters continued to game the banking system and duped lenders and depositors as indicated in a report by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The amount involved in bank frauds was seen rising though the number of cases were on a decline as reported in the latest edition of 'Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2024-25.'

During 2024-25, the total number of frauds decreased to 23,879 cases compared with 36,052 cases in the previous year.

However, the amount rose to ₹34,771 crore from ₹11,261 crore in 2023-24.

Reporting afresh

"This was mainly due to re-examination and reporting afresh of 122 fraud cases amounting to ₹18,336 crore after ensuring compliance with the judgement of the Supreme Court of India dated March 27, 2023," the RBI said.

In the April-September period of 2025-26, the number of fraud cases declined to 5,092 from 18,386 cases in the year-earlier period. However the amount increased to ₹21,515 crore from ₹16,569 crore.

The share of card/Internet frauds in the total stood at 66.8% in terms of number of cases. In terms of amount, advance-related frauds was 33.1%.

In 2024-25, private sector banks (PVBs) accounted for 59.3% of the total number of frauds reported while public sector banks (PSBs) accounted for 70.7% of the amount involved.

Within PVBs, card/Internet-related frauds accounted for the largest share by number, while frauds related to advances constituted the largest share by value in 2024-25.

In contrast, PSBs reported the highest share of frauds related to advances, both in terms of number of cases and the amount involved. The share of card/Internet frauds declined across all bank groups in both number and amount involved during 2024-25.

Banks remain resilient

Overall, the Indian commercial banking sector remained resilient during 2024-25, supported by double-digit balance sheet expansion. Deposits and credit of scheduled commercial banks grew in double digits, albeit with a moderation from last year, the report said. Transmission of policy rate easing during 2025 to deposit and lending rates continued. Profitability of scheduled commercial banks remained robust.

India said to claim $30 bn from RIL, BP on gas output

Reuters
NEW DELHI

India is seeking over $30 billion in compensation from Reliance Industries and BP in an arbitration case for gas it says the companies failed to produce from offshore fields, as per three people with knowledge of the matter.

A tribunal has been hearing the dispute in India since 2016 over gas produced from two deepwater fields, D1 and D3, in the D6 block of the Krishna Godavari basin, seven individuals with knowledge of the proceedings said. Final arguments took place on November 7, they said.

The three-member tribunal is expected to deliver its verdict in mid-2026, two people aware of the hearing schedule said.

The D1 and D3 fields, India's first major deepwater gas project, were seen as key to bolstering the country's energy independence when first developed. However, the high-profile project was plagued by production difficulties related to water ingress and reservoir pressure, as well as cost-recovery disputes with the government, and failed to live up to its initial production hopes.

In 2012, the Oil Ministry told Parliament that prior to commencing the work on the D6 gasfields, Reliance had estimated the recoverable reserves from D1 and D3 at 10.3 trillion cubic feet (tcf) before revising that down to 3.1 tcf.

Reliance Industries KG-D6's facility located in the Andhra Pradesh.

A spokesperson for London-based BP, a Reliance partner in the fields, declined to comment. Spokespeople for India's federal oil, law and information ministries and the PM's office, did not reply to requests seeking comment. Meanwhile, RIL refuted the *Reuters* report as "factually incorrect..inappropriate and irresponsible." The firm said, "There is no claim of $30 billion against Reliance and BP. The claim made by Government of India in relation to KG D6 block is of the order of $247 million, which has been appropriately and consistently disclosed in the company's annual audited financial statements, in accordance with its disclosure requirements."

The $30 bn claim is the largest-ever pursued by the Centre against a firm.

(With Bureau inputs)

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	84,696	-0.41
US Dollar	89.98	------
Gold	1,41,800	------
Brent oil	62.12	------

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	2203.20	-26.70
Adani Ports	1454.40	-32.70
Apollo Hosp	7084.50	-71.50
Asian Paints	2775.40	28.90
Axis Bank	1232.00	3.80
Bajaj Auto	9087.00	22.50
Bajaj Finserv	2012.10	-5.50
Bajaj Finance	998.00	-2.00
Bharat Elec	393.25	-5.20
Bharti Airtel	2081.60	-23.80
Cipla	1494.00	-12.00
Coal India	400.65	-1.50
Dr Reddys Lab	1268.60	-0.70
Hindustan Unilever	40.20	0.00
Eicher Motors	7272.00	-52.00
Eternal Ltd.	282.85	1.10
Grasim Ind	2842.40	24.70
HCL Tech	1630.80	-30.10
HDFC Bank	991.70	-0.40
HDFC Life	746.45	-2.00
Hindalco	865.00	-7.90
Hind Unilever	2293.30	7.90
ICICI Bank	1343.30	-7.10
IntGlobeAvi	5085.50	11.50
Infosys	1644.70	-11.40
ITC	402.60	-1.55
Jio Financial Services Ltd.	293.95	-3.00
JSW Steel	1092.60	-1.80
Kotak Bank	2158.60	-5.60
L&T	4038.70	-8.60
M&M	3592.10	-31.00
Maruti Suzuki	16542.00	-54.00
Max Healthcare	1064.10	-10.20
NestleIndia	1280.00	7.40
NTPC	325.50	1.40
ONGC	234.82	0.29
PowerGrid Corp	260.60	-4.85
Reliance Ind	1545.60	-13.60
SBI Life	2009.80	-9.30
State Bank	965.05	-1.25
Shriram Finance Ltd.	955.50	-4.75
Sun Pharma	1717.20	-2.30
TataConsumerProduct	1195.20	19.50
Tata Steel	172.30	3.18
TCS	3251.50	-28.50
Tech Mahindra	1612.40	0.10
Titan	3983.70	-8.30
Tata Motors PV	358.60	-0.20
Trent Ltd.	4226.00	-59.30
UltraTech Cement	11799.00	5.00
Wipro	264.24	-2.06

'Keep a tab on stress in book'

The Reserve Bank of India on Monday, in a report on banking, asked microfinance institutions to monitor the stress build-up on their books going forward.

'Australia to remove tariffs on Indian exports from Jan. 1'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Piyush Goyal

Australia will provide duty-free access to all Indian exports from January 1, 2026 under the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) between the two countries, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said. The Minister was commenting on the third anniversary of the deal, which came into effect on December 29, 2022.

"From 1 January 2026, 100% of Australian tariff lines will be zero-duty for Indian exports," Mr. Goyal shared on X.

"Over the past three years, the Agreement has delivered sustained export growth, deeper market access, and stronger supply-chain resilience, benefiting Indian exporters, MSMEs, farmers, and workers alike."

The ECTA was an 'early harvest' deal, covering a few of the trade-related issues between the two countries, with both sides currently engaged in negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) that will be broader and deeper in scope.

IPA set to invest ₹300 cr. in poultry complex in Bihar

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Indian Poultry Alliance (IPA), a subsidiary of the Allana Group, has announced to invest ₹300 crore in an integrated poultry complex in Bihar to support poultry production and ensure reliable supply addressing growing demand from both institutional and consumer markets in the eastern region.

The project, the first-of-its-kind in East India, encompasses breeder farms, hatcheries, feed mills, poultry processing facilities and a rendering plant.

Wide range of channels

The facility will cater to a wide range of channels including food service, e-commerce, quick commerce and other B2B and B2C platforms.

"Our decision to invest in Bihar goes beyond strengthening supply reliability for Northeast Bengal. It is equally about supporting local livelihoods, generating employment and contributing to the socio-economic development of the region," said Fauzan Alavi, director, Allana Group.

"This project underscores IPA's long-term commitment to creating a resilient, integrated, and balanced poultry value chain in India," he said.

The project is expected to generate employment for approximately 1,500 people across farming, processing, logistics and allied services. IPA will also focus on implementing best-in-class practices, the company said.

Silver price topped ₹2.5 lakh/kg on MCX but fell ₹28,000 by evening

Subramani Ra Mancombu
CHENNAI

Silver prices topped $80 an ounce on Monday, but then dropped below $75/oz with the U.S.-based CME Group's new regulations set to kick in later in the day.

In India, silver future contracts on the MCX topped ₹2.5 lakh a kg but then fell in line with the global cues. Reacting to the silver market's behaviour, an analyst warned on social media that a "crazy week" is ahead for the white precious metal.

On December 26, the CME Group, which operates major derivatives exchanges such as CME, COMEX, CBOT and NYMEX, announced imposing a $25,000 initial margin for all futures contracts from $22,000 for silver for non-speculative accounts. For speculative accounts, the initial margin is $27,500 against $22,000.

Maintenance fee up

The CME also raised the maintenance fee (for holding positions) to $25,000 from $22,000. The higher initial margin and maintenance fee will come into force after the close of trade on Monday.

CME Group announced $25,000 initial margin for futures.

The announcement for the CME's new regulations was made late on Friday, leading to the market absorbing the shock on Monday.

Silver March futures on COMEX swung over 12% on either rise, rising to a record high $82.615 before dropping to $71.4. At 20:00 IST, they traded at $72.475 an ounce. Silver spot prices were at $72.75/oz.

On the MCX, the March silver contracts hit a high ₹2,54,174 a kg before declining to ₹2,26,700 by mid-evening session. In the Mumbai market, silver evening prices slid to ₹2,35,440 a kg from ₹2,43,483 in the morning.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS-TIRUPATI
MARKETING DEPARTMENT — e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

e-Tenders are invited for procurement and supply of the items (1) 20,000 Nos of Gunny Bags (50 kgs) to the Marketing Department, T.T.Devasthanams,. For Tender notice and tender details log on to the web site **http:// www.tirumala.org** and **https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in.** For further details contact phone numbers: **0877-2264079, 2264555, FAX No: 0877-2264554.**

TTD-40021/10/2025-PRO SEC (Adv.No.340) Date:29-12-2025 — **EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY
e-Tender Notice

Tender No : 06/2025-26/ KWA/PHC/ TVLA ,07/2025-26/ KWA/PHC/ TVLA ,08/2025-26/ KWA/PHC/ TVLA
1)(JJM)-3rd SLSSC - Ranni- Perunad Panchayath- WSS to Seethathode Panchayath & Nilakkal Plappally area in Perunad panchayath - Phase II package 3 -Laying DI pumping main from Sump at Plappally to G.L.S.R at Lahai, DI Gravity line to Thulappally, supply and erection of Clear Water Pump Sets, Construction of 3.50LL capacity Break Pressure Tank between Plappally and Thulappally, etc. **2)**(JJM)- 5th SLSSC : WSS to Seethathode Panchayath - Construction of GLSRs at Aliyanmukku, Kottakuzhy and Seethakuzhy, CWPM, and Distribution Network. **3)**(JJM)-3rd SLSSC- Koipuram Grama panchayath 2021-22- Final Phase-Package I-Laying of Pipe lines and providing 7667 FHTCs in Koipuram.
EMD : Rs. 500000 each, Tender fee : Rs. 19518 each, Last Date for submitting Tender : 16-01-2026 02:00 pm, Phone : 04692600162, Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in
Superintending Engineer
KWA-JB-GL-6-558-2025-26 — PH Circle, Pathanamthitta

सीएमपीडीआई — cmpdi — सेन्ट्रल माईन प्लानिंग एण्ड डिजाईन इन्स्टीच्यूट लिमिटेड
CENTRAL MINE PLANNING & DESIGN INSTITUTE LIMITED
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)
Gondwana Place, Kanke Road, Ranchi-834 008, Jharkhand, INDIA

NOTICE

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on websites of Coal India Ltd. **www.coalindia.in**/respective Subsidiary Company (CMPDI, **www.cmpdi.co.in**), CIL e-procurement portal **https://coalindiatenders.nic.in** and Central Public Procurment Portal **https://eprocure.gov.in** In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal **https://gem.gov.in".**

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT PRASARAN NIGAM LIMITED
NOTICE INVITING BID

1. Bids for "Design, manufacture, testing, supply and installation/demonstration of 1 Set of Insulated Aerial Work Platform and Insulated Scaffolding System for Live line Maintenance system for Transmission Line and Substations upto 400kV voltage class, Hot line maintenance tools with Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) for 3 years, various Hotlines tools including services of hot line maintenance for maintenance of EHV lines along with preventive maintenance/periodic maintenance of Critical 220 kV and 132 kV transmission lines under RVPN transmission system for Jaipur and Ajmer Zone against specification No.RVPN/EHV/A&SP/TN-156 [UBN No. VPN2526WLOB02470]" are invited from interested bidders up to 28.01.2026 (04:00 PM). Other particulars of the bids may be visited on the procurement portal **(http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in)** of the state and **http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rrvpn** departmental website.
2. Bids for "Design, manufacture, testing, supply and installation/demonstration of 1 Set of Insulated Aerial Work Platform and Insulated Scaffolding System for Live line Maintenance system for Transmission Line and Substations upto 400kV voltage class, Hot line maintenance tools with Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) for 3 years, various Hotlines tools including services of hot line maintenance for maintenance of EHV lines along with preventive maintenance/periodic maintenance of Critical 220 kV and 132 kV transmission lines under RVPN transmission system for Jodhpur Zone against specification No.RVPN/EHV/A&SP/TN-157 [UBN No. VPN2526WLOB02471]" are invited from interested bidders up to 28.01.2026 (04:00 PM). Other particulars of the bids may be visited on the procurement portal **(http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in)** of the state and **http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rrvpn** departmental website.

Any extension in bid submission/opening date (if any) will be floated/uploaded on **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in; energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rrvpn & http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in** only.

RRVPN/TR-7313/2025 — Superintending Engineer
Raj.Samwad/C/25/16606 — (Automation, N/M& SP), Jaipur

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APPOINTMENT

VISAKHAPATNAM PORT AUTHORITY
MoPSW,GOVT.of INDIA
VISAKHAPATNAM

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT
Employment Notice No. IGAD/C2/06/2025, Dt.15-12-2025

1.	Name of the Post	**Marine Officer** (T&FC) on contract basis in Marine Dept, VPA on Terms & Conditions.
2.	Remuneration	**Rs.1,50,000/-** per month
3.	No. of Posts	2 (Two)
4.	Last Date of Submission of Application	**30.01.2026**

For details of qualification, experience and age etc, visit VPA website i.e **www.vizagport.com (Careers Section)**

SECRETARY

RAJASTHAN STATE GANGANAGAR SUGAR MILLS LIMITED
(Centre of Excellence for Revenue Research & Analysis) तृतीय मंजिल, उद्योग भवन के पास, झालाना डूंगरी, जयपुर-302004
Tel: 0141-2740841, Fax: 0141-2740676, Email-ID : dgmpurchase.rsgsm@rajasthan.gov.in
NIB. No. :- RSGSM/Corrugated Boxes/RC/2025-26/Pur/ 29 — Dated :- 29/12/2025

NOTICE INVITING BID

Bids for Corrugated Boxes are invited from manufacturers. Interested bidders may submit their bids up to 6.00 p.m. of 15.01.2026. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal **(http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in)** of the state; **http://excise.rajasthan.gov.in/,** departmental website. **UBN : GSM2026GLRC00104**

Raj.Samwad/C/25/16613 — Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND GEOLOGY
Email: dmg-eauction-mines@telangana.gov.in

Ref: 3411746/MI/MMB/Phase-IV/2025 — Date: December 30, 2025

Notice Inviting Tender
'Invitation of bids for grant of Quarry Lease for Minor Mineral blocks'

The Department of Mines and Geology, Government of Telangana, invites bids for the grant of quarry leases for 11 minor mineral blocks through electronic auction under Rule 12 of the Telangana Minor Mineral Concession Rules, 1966, as notified pursuant to Section 15 of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. The minerals proposed for grant include **Building Stone, Colour Granite, Black Granite, Gravel, Rough Stone, and Road Metal.**

Interested bidders may obtain the Tender Document containing eligibility criteria, auction schedule, reserve price, bidding parameters, terms and conditions, and other details from the e-auction portal of MSTC Limited at **(https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mmb/tgmmb/index.jsp).**

Mineral Block Summaries and the model tender document are available free of cost on the portal. Block-specific Tender Documents are available for purchase on the portal. Interested bidders may register themselves on the website to obtain login credentials required for submission of bids and participation in the e-auction process.

The date for commencement of Sale of Tender Document is Wednesday, December 31, 2025. The last date for purchase of the Tender Document is Tuesday, 27 January 2026, on or before 17:00 hours (IST) and the last date for submission of bids is Monday, 2 February 2026, on or before 17:00 hours (IST).

Sd/-
DIPR R.O. No. : 992-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2025-26, Date: 29-12-2025 — Director of Mines & Geology(FAC)

Bengaluru West City Corporation
Office of the Executive Engineer, Rajarajeshwari Nagar Division, Near Ramakrishna Hedge Park, Nagarabhavi 2nd Stage, Bengaluru-560 072.

No. BWCC/EE/RRND/PR/137/2025-26 — Dated: 29.12.2025

Postponement of Tender Notification

Sub: Regarding postponement of Short Term Tender Notification of Package-1 work by Bengaluru West City Corporation, Rajarajeshwari Nagar Division Limits.

Ref: Short Term Tender Notification No. BWCC/EE/RRND/Tend/01/2025-26, Dated: 01.12.2025

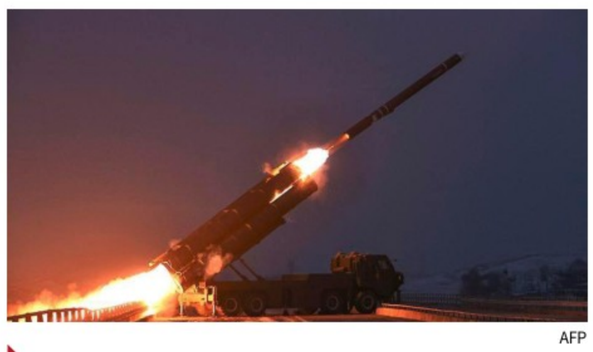
With reference to the above subject and tender has been called from this division and it was published in KPP Portal. Due to some technical problem the tender date and time has been extended and revised calendar events is as under.

Revised Time Schedule (1) Pre bid meeting at Chief Engineer, BWCC, Zone-1 on **05.01.2026 at 11:30 a.m. (2)** Tender must be submitted online through KPP Portal on **12.01.2026 before 4:00 p.m. (3)** Technical Bids will be opened on **13.01.2026 at 4:30 p.m. (4)** Financial bids will be opned on **14.01.2026 at 4:30 p.m.**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Rajarajeshwari Nagar Division, BWCC.

SEOUL

North Korea tests cruise missiles; Kim vows nuclear development



AFP

North Korea test-fired two strategic long-range cruise missiles, state media said on Monday, hailing the exercise as a show of "combat readiness" against foreign threats. Leader Kim Jong-Un oversaw the drill staged on Sunday and called for "unlimited and sustained" development of nuclear weapons forces, state-run *KCNA* said. AFP

YANGON

Pro-military party claims huge lead in junta-run elections in Myanmar

AP

Myanmar's dominant pro-military party claimed an overwhelming victory in the first phase of the elections, a party official said, after critics warned the junta-run poll would entrench military rule. "We won 82 lower house seats in townships, out of the total of 102," a member of the Union Solidarity and Development Party said. AFP

PALM BEACH

Trump and Netanyahu meet to discuss next phase of Gaza plan

AFP

U.S. President Donald Trump met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Mar-a-Lago beach club in Florida on Monday for talks aimed at breaking a deadlock over the Gaza ceasefire and addressing Israeli concerns about Iran and Lebanese group Hezbollah. REUTERS

MEXICO CITY

13 dead, nearly 100 injured after train derails in southern Mexico

AFP

Officials said a train accident in southern Mexico killed at least 13 people and injured 98 others, halting traffic along a rail line connecting the Pacific Ocean with the Gulf of Mexico. The Interoceanic Train linking Oaxaca and Veracruz went off the rails on Sunday as it passed a curve near the town of Nizanda. AP

Russia says Ukraine attacked Putin's home; Kyiv calls it a 'lie' to dent talks

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov claims '91 long-range unmanned drones' from Ukraine targeted the President's residence; Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy calls Moscow's claim 'a complete fabrication' to derail peace process

Agence France-Presse
KYIV

Russia accused Ukraine on Monday of having fired dozens of drones at one of President Vladimir Putin's homes, an accusation that Ukraine called a "lie" aimed at undermining U.S.-led efforts to end the war.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who does not typically announce drone strikes, said Ukraine had fired "91 long-range unmanned aerial vehicles" at Mr. Putin's residence in the Novgorod region between late Sunday and early Monday, all of which were shot down.

Russia's negotiating position will be reconsidered following the 'attack', says Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. REUTERS

"Given the complete degeneration of the criminal Kyiv regime, which has shifted to a policy of state terrorism, Russia's negotiating position will be reconsidered," Mr. Lavrov said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who met with U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday for talks on ending the war, called Russia's claim "a complete fabrication" designed to derail the peace process and suggested Moscow was preparing to intensify its bombardment of Ukraine.

"Russia is at it again, using dangerous statements to undermine all achievements of our shared diplomatic efforts with President Trump's team," the Ukrainian leader wrote on X. Russia's accusation comes at a pivotal moment in the peace process.

Security guarantees

Ukraine says it has agreed to 90% of a U.S.-drafted peace plan – including the issue of post-war security guarantees – though the issue of territory in a post-war settlement remains unresolved.

Mr. Trump has held talks with both sides in recent days, including a phone call with Mr. Putin on Monday that the White House described as "positive". During talks with Mr. Zelenskyy on Sunday, Mr. Trump offered Kyiv long-sought-after security guarantees for a period of 15 years, according to Kyiv.

But the issue of territory and the future of the Moscow-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine remain unresolved, Mr. Zelensky said.

The current plan would stop the war at the current front lines in the eastern Donbas region and establish a demilitarised area.

Amid internal opposition, Bangladesh uprising leaders ally with Jamaat for polls

Agence France-Presse
DHAKA

Bangladesh's largest Islamist party announced on Sunday a seat-sharing agreement with a political grouping formed by students who spearheaded last year's uprising, some of whose members oppose the alliance.

Jamaat-e-Islami appears determined to gain a foothold in government through next year's general election, the first polls since the student-led revolt toppled Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024.

On Sunday, the Jamaat said it had reached an agreement with the student-led National Citizen Party (NCP) following marathon talks, during which

Nahid Islam

some NCP members warned against the move.

Ahead of the tie-up with the Jamaat, at least 30 NCP members wrote to party chief Nahid Islam, opposing the move. In a letter, they said NCP's ideology and its commitment to democratic values contradicted those of the Jamaat.

But Mr. Islam defended the alliance, saying it was "not an ideological agreement, but an electoral alliance".

"To ensure a free, fair, and competitive election, and to prevent the return of hegemonic forces, the NCP felt the need for broader unity," he said at a media briefing.

The main leader of the uprising Mahfuz Alam distanced himself from the decision taken by 'his disciples'. In a Facebook post, Mr. Alam declined to be a "part of this NCP".

"Under the prevailing circumstances, my respect, affection and friendship for my July comrades will not be erased. But I am not becoming part of this NCP," Mr. Alam wrote.

(With inputs from PTI)

China stages record military drills simulating blockade of key ports encircling Taiwan

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

China launched live-fire drills around Taiwan on Monday that it said would simulate a blockade of the self-ruled island's key ports, prompting Taipei to condemn Beijing's "military intimidation".

Beijing claims Taiwan as part of its sovereign territory and has refused to rule out using military action to seize the island democracy.

The latest show of force follows a bumper round of arms sales to Taipei by the United States, Taiwan's main security backer.

Beijing warned on Monday that "external forces" arming Taipei would "push the Taiwan Strait into a perilous situation of imminent war", but did not mention any countries by name. Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said any attempts to stop China's unification with Taiwan were "doomed to fail".

89 Chinese military aircraft detected near shore, says the Defence Ministry of Taiwan

Taipei condemned China's "disregard for international norms and the use of military intimidation to threaten neighbouring countries", Presidential Office spokeswoman Karen Kuo said.

Its Defence Ministry said it had detected 89 Chinese military aircraft near its shores on Monday – the highest number in a single day since October 2024. It also said it had detected 28 warships and coastguard vessels.

Taiwan's military said it had established a response centre, deployed "appropriate forces" and "carried out a rapid response exercise", while its coastguard said it "immediately deployed large vessels".

China's military last held large-scale drills involving live firing around Taiwan in April.

Thailand and Cambodia to 'consolidate' ceasefire deal

Reuters
BEIJING

Thailand and Cambodia plan to rebuild mutual trust and gradually consolidate a ceasefire after weeks of border clashes, Beijing said in a communique with the two countries following talks in China.

In a meeting with his Thai and Cambodian counterparts in the Chinese province of Yunnan, Foreign Minister Wang Yi called the ceasefire "hard-won".

Even as the talks in China wrapped up, Thailand's Army on Monday accused Cambodia of violating a newly signed truce deal by flying more than 250 drones over its territory.

Not satisfied with India's response to Myanmar polls, say anti-junta rebels

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Myanmar's rebels are not satisfied with the Indian position regarding the country's election that began on December 28, said representatives of multiple rebel groups from Karen and Arakan (Rakhine) States here on Monday.

Speaking at an event at the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), representatives of Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), Anti-Sham Election Campaign Committee and All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress of Burma (AASYC) expressed hope that the U.K. and the EU would not recognise the outcome of the poll by the junta and accused the Chinese government of encouraging the military regime.

Questions remain: A vendor arranges newspapers reporting on Myanmar's general election in Yangon on Monday. AFP

"We have been engaging and talking with the international community. We have received positive response from U.K. and the EU that they will not recognise the election. We are waiting for the Indian government to clarify their position and overall we are not satisfied with the Indian position," said Ko Ting Oo, the leader of the Anti-Sham Election Campaign Committee.

India has been calling for inclusive election in Myanmar but the Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) and the exiled National Unity Government (NUG) have been calling upon India to exert more pressure on the junta to make the election truly inclusive.

They called upon India to provide them platforms to hold talks among the leading stakeholders in Myanmar so that the consultative process can be advanced in the backdrop of the three-phased polling that will also take place on January 11 and 25, 2026.

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MIXED FORTUNES

Injured Atkinson ruled out of fifth Test; Khawaja to play in Sydney

AFP

England pacer Gus Atkinson, *in pic.*, has been ruled out of the fifth Test against Australia with a hamstring injury. Atkinson hobbled off on day two of the fourth Test and took no further part. Meanwhile, Australia head coach Andrew McDonald confirmed Usman Khawaja will play in Sydney amid speculation it could be his last Test.

TRAINING GROUND

Bethell credits IPL stint for coping with pressure of Ashes debut

REUTERS

Young England batter Jacob Bethell said his stint with RCB in the IPL helped him cope with the pressure of making his Ashes debut at the MCG. "I was pretty nervous. Not so much with the people, just the occasion, I guess. But I've played over in India (in the IPL) where it feels like there's 160,000 people watching".

HAZARE TROPHY

Kohli to turn out for Delhi against Railways on Jan. 6

K. MURALI KUMAR

Virat Kohli will play Delhi's Vijay Hazare Trophy game against the Railways on January 6 in Bengaluru, DDCA president Rohan Jaitley said on Monday. The BCCI diktat for all centrally-contracted players was to take part in at least two games in the tournament, but Kohli wants to play a third match ahead of the series against the Kiwis.

WINNING START

Bengal Tigers edge Soorma in Women's Hockey India League

PTI

Shrachi Bengal Tigers registered a 1-0 victory over JSW Soorma Hockey Club in their first match of the Women's Hero Hockey India League in Ranchi on Monday. Augustina Gorzelany's powerful drag-flick in the 11th minute proved to be the difference between the two teams as Bengal Tigers pocketed full points.

Dominant Team India targets a clean sweep

Bristling with confidence, a 5-0 verdict against the visiting Sri Lankans would be an ideal way for the Women in Blue to start preparations for the T20 World Cup to be held next year

SRI LANKA IN INDIA

P.K. Ajith Kumar
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Bowl first? Get them for 120. Bat first? Get 220.

The team meetings may have perhaps gone somewhat along those lines for the Women in Blue in the five-match T20I series against Sri Lanka.

Fresh from their triumph at home in the ODI World Cup, they are playing like a champion side that is bristling with confidence.

Sri Lanka did come up with a vastly improved batting display in the fourth T20I at the Greenfield Stadium on Sunday, but the bowlers had conceded far too many runs. The host thus won the match by 30 runs, after posting its biggest-ever T20I total (221 for two).

It was the first time India was batting first in the series. It was for the first time that Chamari Athapaththu was winning the toss.

After the way her batters, herself included, struggled against a balanced Indian attack and failed to set a decent target, it was hardly a surprise to see her choose fielding.

It was hardly surprising to see Shafali Verma go after the Lankan bowlers, either, after hitting back-to-back fifties. What was a bit surprising was the way she controlled her aggression. Adding a little bit of caution to the fearlessness of her batting could do no harm.

Continue the joy: Harmanpreet will expect her teammates to rise to the occasion again and reprise such a happy moment in the final T20I on Tuesday. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

Prolific pair

Her opening stand of 162 with Smriti Mandhana – India's highest for any wicket – effectively ensured a 4-0 lead for her team. Remarkably, India's all three highest partnerships in the format belong to this pair.

Smriti, who hadn't got going in the series till then, must be pleased with her 80. Her smile and her drives were back at their brightest.

Richa Ghosh also lit up the stadium with her own scintillating strokeplay, as she clobbered a 16-ball 40 not out, after being promoted to No. 3.

The team management must be pleased with the way she responded to the challenge, with the T20 World Cup not that far away.

A 5-0 victory would be an ideal way to start the preparation for that big event.

Make no mistake, this Indian side will not be happy with anything less in a series it has batted and bowled with such dominance. Yes, the fielding hasn't been as good, and there is certainly room for improvement.

As for the Lankans, they must be hoping to build on the overall improvement they showed in the last game and to avoid their worst T20I series defeat in history.

The teams (from): India: Harmanpreet Kaur (Capt.), Smriti Mandhana, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Harleen Deol, Sneh Rana, Richa Ghosh, Amanjot Kaur, Arundhati Reddy, Kranti Gaud, Renuka Singh, G. Kamalini, Shree Charani and Vaishnavi Sharma.

Sri Lanka: Chamari Athapaththu (Capt.), Harshitha Samarawickrama, Hasini Perera, Vishmi Gunaratne, Nilakshika Silva, Kavisha Dilhari, Imesha Dulani, Kaushini Nuthyangana, Malsha Shehani, Inoka Ranaweera, Shashini Gimhani, Nimasha Meepage, Kawya Kavindi, Rashmika Sewwandi and Malki Madara.

Match starts at 7 p.m.

Smriti — an exemplary artiste who can compose masterpieces

P.K. Ajith Kumar
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Smriti Mandhana's batting is a thing of beauty, and therefore, a joy forever.

Its loveliness increases, too. Even Keats, who penned those immortal lines in *Endymion*, would have approved.

Smriti's batting is indeed poetry in motion. Her drives, her lofts, her dancing down the track-...they are among the most pleasing sights in contemporary sport.

She uses the bat as a painter would the brush. Even in the mad world of T20 cricket, where there isn't the time to set up a canvas, she could compose enduring works of art. Like she did on Sunday, in the fourth T20I against Sri Lanka at the Greenfield Stadium.

Sheer delight: It's a treat to watch Smriti on song. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

During the course of her 48-ball 80, she recorded a significant feat. She became only the fourth woman in history to make 10,000 international runs.

And she is the second Indian to do it. The first one, Mithali Raj, was watching her do it from the commentators' box. She was the second to join that exclusive club, which was founded by England's Charlotte Edwards. Suzie Bates of New Zealand is the other.

Mithali is heading that list with 10,868 runs, followed by Bates (10,652) and Edwards (10,273). Smriti is the fastest to reach that mark, in her 281st innings, 10 less than her compatriot. She is also well poised to go on top: she is only 29.

Most of her runs have come against the white ball. That is because women get to play so few Tests. She has played just seven Tests, from which she has scored two hundreds. She has 14 centuries in ODIs and one in T20Is.

During the World Cup, in which she was the tournament's second-highest scorer, she became the first woman to score 1,000 runs in a calendar year.

She will continue to create more batting records. And she will provide more joy, while making all those runs.

Smriti reminds me of Gower, says Sri Lankan coach Ratnayake

P.K. Ajith Kumar
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Rumesh Ratnayake's team was at the receiving end of Smriti Mandhana's bat in the fourth T20I on Sunday. But, that didn't stop him from admiring her grace.

The Sri Lankan coach was, in fact, reminded of someone he used to bowl in Tests in his days.

"Smriti looked a little bit like David Gower," he said. "I was actually speaking about that to W.V. Raman. She has that same laidback style to her batting, a lazy elegance. It is always nice to watch a left-hander bat.

"And her scoring 10,000 runs in international cricket is a huge achievement."

Ratnayake was glad that Sri Lanka was finally able to put up a good fight against India after being outplayed in the first three T20Is.

"Someone can say we lost the toss in the first three matches, but we should have done much better than we did," said the former pacer who played 23 Tests and 70 ODIs .

"We gave away a lot of easy runs, with loose balls, but I am not taking anything away from the skillsets of the Indian batters."

One of those batters who smashed the Lankan bowlers around, Richa Ghosh, said she wanted to score quick runs after she was promoted up the order.

"My motto is to score runs and provide a good finish to the team," she said.

She said the World Cup victory had changed the lives of the Indian players. "We receive a warm welcome from the public," she said. "Now people know who Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh or Shafali Verma is... And that is a great thing".

Bumrah has a quiet net session in Ahmedabad

M.R.Praveen Chandran
AHMEDABAD

Indian speedster Jasprit Bumrah made a surprise visit to the Gujarat College ground on Monday while Tamil Nadu was playing Karnataka in the Vijay Hazare Trophy.

Bumrah bowled at the nets and left quietly.

There were no screaming fans or autograph hunters, and Bumrah had a short but quality stint under the watchful eyes of former Gujarat coach Hitesh Majmudar.

After warming up, the 32-year-old started with a few deliveries from two steps, gradually increasing his run-up.

By the end of the session Bumrah was bowling with a full run-up, though understandably not at full clip but kept the batter on his toes.

"Ride the bounce," he told Gujarat Ranji batter Sunpreet Bagga after beating him.

Gearing up: Bumrah had a short but quality stint. VIJAY SONEJI

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Bumrah bowled a few more deliveries that reared off the wicket, and after half an hour ended the session.

Bagga pleased

"He wasn't bowling at full pace – around 130-135km. I faced two overs from him," said a pleased Bagga and he should be as it is not every day you get a chance to face one of the best in the business.

ICC rates MCG pitch as 'unsatisfactory'; hands one demerit point

THE ASHES

Reuters
MELBOURNE

The Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) pitch for the Boxing Day Test between Australia and England has been given an 'unsatisfactory' rating after 20 wickets fell in the first three sessions and the match was wrapped up inside two days.

Minefield

England won the low-scoring fourth Ashes Test by four wickets on a minefield of a pitch, with the premature finish leaving Cricket Australia (CA) millions of dollars out of pocket.

"The MCG pitch was too much in favour of the bowlers," match referee Jeff Crowe said in a statement issued by the governing International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday.

"With 20 wickets falling on the first day, 16 on the second day and no batter even reaching a half-century, the pitch was 'Unsatisfactory' as per the guidelines and the venue gets one demerit point."

The MCG's demerit point will stand for the next five years.

A venue accruing six demerit points in a five-year period leads to a one-year ban on hosting an international cricket match.

CA Chief of Cricket James Allsopp said that the pitch did not provide the MCG's customary balance-between the bat and the ball but was confident the issue would not be repeated.

"We're confident they will deliver first-rate surfaces for next year's Boxing Day Test against New Zealand and the hugely anticipated 150th anniversary Test against England in March 2027," he added.

Great win: Arjun got the better of Carlsen in the ninth round. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Arjun in lead with Caruana and Vachier-Lagrave

CHESS

Sports Bureau

Arjun Erigaisi shared the lead with two others at the end of the 13th round of the World blitz chess championship in Doha on Monday. Earlier in the day, he had stunned top seed Magnus Carlsen with black pieces in the ninth round.

The 10th-seeded Indian has 10 points, the same as Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Fabiano Caruana.

The trio is followed half-a-point behind by six men, but none of them Indian.

M. Praneesh, H. Goutham Krishna, who turned heads in the World rapid championship too, R. Praggnanandhaa, Raunak Sadhwani and S.L. Narayanan are all on nine points. Six rounds remain in the league phase.

The semifinals and the finals will be played on Tuesday.

The women's event though has been a big disappointment for India. The best-placed Indian at the end of the 10th round was Divya Deshmukh.

The World-Cup winner was 34th with six points, way behind the sole leader Eline Roberts (8.5).

Koneru Humpy was on five points.

INBRIEF

WPL: MI appoints Beams as spin-bowling coach

Defending champion Mumbai Indians has appointed former Australian leg-spinner Kristen Beams as spin-bowling coach ahead of the 2026 Women's Premier League (WPL) season. Beams was instrumental in Australia's World Cup campaigns, finishing as the third-highest wicket-taker at the 2017 ODI World Cup. Her international career spanned one Test, 30 ODIs and 18 T20Is, and 45 T20 games in the WBBL, prior to her transition to coaching.

Neeru Dhanda bags gold in women's trap at the Nationals

Neeru Dhanda clinched the women's trap gold in the National shooting championships in New Delhi on Monday. The 25-year-old finished on top with 41 hits in the final. She held off a strong challenge from Delhi's Kirti Gupta, who took the silver with 40. Neeru's Madhya Pradesh statemate Pragati Dubey claimed the bronze with 32. In junior men's trap, Aryavansh Tyagi shot 42 for the gold. Punjab's Keshav Chauhan took silver with 37, while Uttar Pradesh's Zuhair Khan claimed the bronze with 30.

Takale to return with team Aerpace Racers in Dakar Rally

Sanjay Takale, the only Indian to take part in four-wheeler category in the Dakar Rally, will make his second successive appearance in the event, beginning in Saudi Arabia on January 3. Takale, who made his debut earlier this year, was placed 18th overall and 10th in his class – Dakar Classic category – a 'regularity event' for vintage vehicles. The 57-year-old will race for Team Aerpace Racers along with French navigator Maxime Raud. The rally will conclude on Jan. 17.

Ronaldo determined to score 1,000 goals in his career

Cristiano Ronaldo has expressed his determination to score 1,000 goals by the end of his career. And the 40-year-old Portugal superstar is in no doubt he'll get there. "I will reach that number for sure, if no injuries," Ronaldo said late on Sunday at the Globe Soccer Awards in Dubai, where he was named as the best player in the Middle East. Ronaldo moved onto 956 career goals by scoring twice for Al-Nassr in the Saudi Pro League on Saturday.

Shrijith and Shreyas do the star turn as Karnataka aces another chase

The two add 116 for the fifth wicket as the defending champion notches up its third successive win; MP gets the better of Kerala on a turning track

HAZARE TROPHY

M.R.Praveen Chandran
AHMEDABAD

Karnataka aced another chase, this time against Tamil Nadu, to continue its winning run in the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Monday.

Tamil Nadu managed to stretch Karnataka, but the defending champion found heroes in wicket-keeper K.L. Shrijith (77) and all-rounder Shreyas Gopal (55). The two figured in a match-winning stand of 116 for the fifth wicket as Karnataka chased down the target of 289 with 17 balls to spare to record its third consecutive victory.

Tamil Nadu sensed a glimmer of hope when Mayank Agarwal (58) was caught behind off Sunny Sandhu to reduce Karnataka to 136 for four, but Shrijith and Shreyas shut out any hopes with their busy fifth-wicket stand.

The duo rotated the strike by taking sharp singles and punished the odd loose ball to build the partnership. When Shrijith and Shreyas were dismissed off successive deliveries, Abhinav Manohar (20 not out) and Vidyadhar Patil (17 not out) hastened the victory with a flurry of big shots.

Earlier, restrictive lines from Karnataka spinners Shreesha Achar (two for 47) and Shreyas (one for 47) strangled the Tamil Nadu batters in the middle overs. Captain N. Jagadeesan (65) played fluently, but B. Indrajith (28) and opener S.R. Athish (14) struggled.

Achar took the big wicket of Jagadeesan while Shreyas prised out Indrajith as Tamil Nadu lost momentum in the middle overs. Abhilash Shetty's choking spell at the death in which he dismissed the well-settled Pradosh Ranjan Paul (57) and Sai Kishore (38) helped Karnataka bowl out Tamil Nadu for 288.

Himanshu Mantri (93,105b, 7x4) and the spinners fired Madhya Pradesh to its second consecutive win as Kerala collapsed in a heap while chasing a target of 215 at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

Himanzhu added 66 runs for the ninth wicket with Tripuesh Singh (37) after spinners Ankit Sharma (four for 38) and B. Aparajith (three for 36) reduced Madhya Pradesh to 144 for eight.

Sharafuddeen's hard-hitting knock of 42 reduced the margin of defeat for Kerala which was dismissed for 167.

On a turning wicket, the Kerala batters fell to the guiles of Shubham Sharma (three for 16), Shivang Kumar (two for 42) and Saransh Jain (two for 17).

Top knock: Shrijith smashed six fours and a couple of sixes in his 78-ball 77. VIJAY SONEJI

A perfect team win, says Mayank Agarwal

M.R. Praveen Chandran
AHMEDABAD

After savouring the win from another clinical chase, Karnataka captain termed it as the best all round performance from his side in this tournament.

The captain was mighty pleased with the efforts of the bowlers especially the spinners Sreesha S.Achar and Shreyas Gopal in restricting Tamil Nadu to 288.

The skipper said he never felt his team was under pressure even though Tamil Nadu put the champion in a spot of bother at 136 for four.

"We bat deep so I wasn't worried when we were four down. Shrijith and Shreyas played as the situation demanded and what was expected of them. But I must give credit to spinners Achar and Shreyas, they bowled really well in the middle overs. Abhilash Shetty was superb at the death. It was a perfect team win,"' said Mayank.

K.L.Shrijith, who played a crucial knock of 77, said the plan was to rotate the strike and wait for loose balls to hit the big shots. Shrijith said he enjoyed batting with Shreyas Gopal who also played with a similar mindset.

"We both play similarly and I enjoyed batting with him (shreyas). The plan was to pinch singles, play the odd big shots, and keep the target within 70 runs in the final 10 overs," said the wicketkeeper-batter.

HAZARE TROPHY — MONDAY'S SCORES

ELITE

Group A (Ahmedabad)

Tamil Nadu 288 in 49.5 overs (N. Jagadeesan 65, Pradosh Ranjan Paul 57, Abhilash Shetty 4/57) lost to Karnataka 293/6 in 47.1 overs (Mayank Agarwal 58, K.L. Shrijith 77, Shreyas Gopal 55).

Madhya Pradesh 214 in 46.1 overs (Himanshu Mantri 93, Ankit Sharma 4/38) bt Kerala 167 in 40.1 overs (Sharafuddeen 42).

Tripura 286 in 49.5 overs (Tejasvi Jaiswal 61, Udiyan Bose 40, Sridam Paul 50, Rajat Dey 43) bt Rajasthan 220 in 44.2 overs (Karan Lamba 61, Vijay Shankar 4/30).

Jharkhand 368/7 in 50 overs (Utkarsh Singh 74, Kumar Kushagra 105, Anukul Roy 98 n.o., Kounain Quaraishi 43) bt Pondicherry 235 in 41.4 overs (Neyan Kangayan 47, Jashwanth Shreeram 60).

Group B (Rajkot)

Hyderabad 310/8 in 50 overs (Rahul Singh 79, Abhirath Reddy 54, Varun Goud 42, Nitesh Reddy 53) lost to Assam 314/6 in 49.3 overs (Saurav Dihingia 91, Sibsankar Roy 112, Denish Das 54).

Chandigarh 319 in 48.2 overs (Manan Vohra 122, Sanyam Saini 67, Mukesh Kumar 5/59) lost to Bengal 320/4 in 47.4 overs (Abishek Porel 106, Anustup Majumdar 63, Shahbaz Ahmed 76 n.o.).

Jammu and Kashmir 311/9 in 50 overs (Qamran Iqbal 54, Yawer Hassan 79, Auqib Nabi 40, Yudhvir Singh 42 n.o.) lost to Vidarbha 315/5 in 48.3 overs (Aman Mokhade 139, R. Samarth 114).

Uttar Pradesh 369/7 in 50 overs (Abhishek Goswami 51, Dhruv Jurel 160 n.o., Rinku Singh 63, Raj Limbani 4/74) bt Baroda 315 in 50 overs (Shashwat Rawat 60, Krunal Pandya 82, Vishnu Solanki 43, Atit Sheth 46).

Group C (Jaipur)

Chhattisgarh 142 in 38.1 overs (Amandeep Khare 63, Ajay Mandal 46, Shardul Thakur 4/13, Shams Mulani 5/31) lost to Mumbai 144/1 in 24 overs (Angkrish Raghuvanshi 68 n.o., Siddhesh Lad 48 n.o.).

Himachal Pradesh 271 in 49.4 overs (Pukhraj Mann 110, Ramakrishna Ghosh 7/42) bt Maharashtra 264/9 in 50 overs (Ankit Bawne 97).

Punjab 269/8 in 50 overs (Salil Arora 65 retd. hurt, Krish Bhagat 51) lost to Uttarakhand 270/5 in 47.4 overs (Kunal Chandela 118, Shashwat Dangwal 51 n.o.).

Goa 309/8 in 50 overs (Suyash Prabhudesai 55, Lalit Yadav 131 n.o.) bt Sikkim 247/7 in 50 overs (Sai Satwik 50, Amit Rajera 50, Gurinder Singh 52 n.o.).

Group D (Bengaluru)

Haryana 299 in 49.4 overs (Mayank Shandilya 86, H.J. Rana 57, Samant Jakhar 49) bt Gujarat 273 in 47.1 overs (Jaymeet Patel 67, Vishal B. Jayswal 51, Ravi Bishnoi 40).

Andhra 221 in 49.2 overs (SDNV Prasad 66, Saurabh Kumar 47) lost to Odisha 223/4 in 43.4 overs (Om T. Munde 91, Govinda Poddar 89).

Saurashtra 320/7 in 50 overs (Vishvarajsinh Jadeja 115, Gajjar Sammar 41, Ruchit Ahir 95 n.o.) lost to Delhi 321/7 in 48.5 overs (Priyansh Arya 78, Tejasvi Dahiya 53, Harsh Tyagi 49).

Railways 365/7 in 50 overs (Pratham Singh 73, Ravi Singh 88, Ashutosh Sharma 50, Zubair Ali Khan 48 n.o.) bt Services 281 in 47.2 overs (Sagar Dahiya 95, Ravi Chauhan 73).

PLATE (Ranchi)

Meghalaya 217/9 in 50 overs (Ram Gurung 56 n.o.) lost to Bihar 220/2 in 32.3 overs (Piyush Singh 100 n.o., Akash Raj 75 n.o.).

Arunachal Pradesh 246 in 49.5 overs (Techi Doria 83, Techi Neri 62, Pheiroijam Jotin 5/55) lost to Manipur 250/6 in 46.3 overs (Karnajit Yumnam 116 n.o.).

Nagaland 399/4 in 50 overs (Sedezhalie Rupero 124, Dega Nischal 182, Chetan Bist 57 n.o.) bt Mizoram 222 in 42 overs (Sahil Reza 104, Lalroluahpuia Ngente 40).

LIVE TELECAST

HIL: Sony Sports Ten 1 & LIV, 7 p.m.

India Women vs Sri Lanka Women: 5th T20I, JioHotstar, 7 p.m.

Premier League: SS Select 1, 2 & JioHotstar, 1 a.m. onwards (Wednesday)

Kumar Bangarappa elected KBA chief

BADMINTON

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

Kumar Bangarappa, son of former Karnataka Chief Minister S. Bangarappa and a Bharatiya Janata Party member, was elected president of the Karnataka Badminton Association (KBA).

According to a press release issued by the KBA on Monday, the 19 office-bearers were chosen unopposed for the 2025-29 term in the election held on Sunday.

But it is to be noted that the KBA does not strictly follow the Badminton Association of India (BAI) bylaws and is said to be nonconformist towards the National Sports Code too.

In the KBA's 19-member body, there are 10 life-members and nine district representatives, which is not in line with the Sports Code. The Sport Code asks for at least 50% of the district associations to be affiliated to the state federation, which is in turn affiliated to the national body.

In 2022, this very aspect had led to the BAI disaffiliating the KBA temporarily before the High Court of Karnataka ordered a stay, which is still in force.

It also remains to be seen what effect the impeding notification of the National Sports Governance Act 2025 has on the proceedings.

It was recently reported that the Union Sports Ministry had asked all National Sports Federations to defer elections until the end of 2026 to allow sufficient time to amend their respective constitutions in accordance with the Act.

In the list of KBA officials, the entry of former India international badminton player Anup Sridhar is noticeable. Barely a year ago, he was appointed one of the coaches of Singapore, but Anup, a former National champion who has trained the likes of P.V. Sindhu and Lakshya Sen, has since quit his position and returned to India.

The office-bearers: S. Kumar Bangarappa (president), V. Muralidhar (secretary), G.M. Nischitha (treasurer), Anup Sridhar (joint-secretary), H. Anil Kumar, S.N. Basavaraja, Kiran Bellam, T.S. Vishwas, C.S. Mahesh (vice-presidents).

The KBA office-bearers were chosen unopposed for the 2025-29 term in the election
In the 19-member body, there are 10 life-members and nine district representatives, which is not in line with the Sports Code

Bracewell. FILE PHOTO

Bracewell announces retirement

ANI
WELLINGTON

Former New Zealand all-rounder Doug Bracewell announced his retirement from all forms of cricket on Monday.

In a post on *X*, New Zealand Cricket's official handle announced Bracewell's retirement news, crediting his pivotal role in New Zealand's memorable Test victory over Australia in Hobart in 2011, where he recorded his best Test figures of six for 40 in the second innings to secure a remarkable seven-run win.

Bracewell played 28 Tests, 21 ODIs and 20 T20Is for the Black Caps taking 120 wickets and scoring 915 runs.

Bracewell expressed pride in his cricketing career and said he is grateful for the opportunities he has had.

KARNATAKA ROUND-UP

Karnataka takes first day's honours

RAIPUR: Karnataka took the day-one honours after skittling Goa out for 160 and coming within six runs of its opponent's score in the Vijay Merchant Trophy (under-16) match here.

On Monday, Suvik Gill scalped five for 32 before Niranjan Ashok and R. Rohith Reddy remained unbeaten on 72 and 78 respectively to put Karnataka in a position of immense strength.

The scores: Goa 160 in 55 overs (Adeep Miskin 68, Suvik Gill 5/32) vs. Karnataka 154 for no loss in 33 overs (Niranjan Ashok 72 n.o., R. Rohith Reddy 78 n.o.).

Hrithik's unbeaten ton highlights DPS (East)'s romp into the last four

BENGALURU: K. Hrithik Polin scored an unbeaten 145 as DPS (East) thrashed DPS, Electronic City by 197 runs to enter the semifinals of the BTR Shield U-14 school first-division tournament.

The scores (quarterfinals): St. Joseph's BHS 214/9 in 50 overs (C.M. Naksh 63, S.M. Bhavith 63) lost to Max Muller HS 218/9 in 45.4 overs (Athreya Bhat 50, Rajveer Padam Mehta 58).

DPS, East 355/4 in 50 overs (Ashwwath Nagarajan 43, K. Hrithik Polin 145 n.o, Krishna 96) bt DPS, Electronic City 158/7 in 50 overs (Vikrant Ronav Budala 90).

Holy Saint ES 167 in 49.3 overs (A. Sachin 41, P. Kishan 51) lost to DPS, North 168/2 in 31.2 overs (Tanush Mishra 95, Saachin Suresh Araganji 47 n.o.)

Poorna Vikasa Vidyalaya 243/5 in 50 overs (Mahin Srikanth 67, Sachith Shetty 66, P. Lithik Reddy 55 n.o.) bt DPS, South 203 in 50 overs (Hannan Zaki Ahmad 40, Akarsh M. Appinakatte 77, Tejas Sudhindra Bhat 4/25).

Spartons SC to play Sapphire CC for the top honours

Spartons SC will take on Sapphire CC in the final of the KSCA (Group I) fourth division league.

The scores (semifinals): Sangam CA 211 in 48 overs (Deepak Shridhar 59, A.S. Ratan Thosh 52, Nithin Naidu 4/22) lost to Spartons SC 212/9 in 42.5 overs (Desmond Antony 45).

Freelancers 170 in 44.3 overs (Angadraj Sangam Hittalamani 4/21) lost to Sapphire 172/7 in 45.4 overs (B. Tanu 42, Thrivarna Sagar 43 n.o.).

RWF FC gets the better of DYES FC

RWF FC defeated DYES FC 7-3 in the BDFA A division league championship here on Monday.

The results: Technico 2 (G.S. Kakkanattu 55, 90+7) bt Income Tax 1 (Barry Anand Francis 34); RWF FC 7 (Prajesh 6, 8, 28, Prakash Chandar 30, M. Robinson 48, 90+1, Himadeep Gowda (OG) 90+7) bt DYES FC 3 (Santosh Tamata 17, 58, S.A. Chandan 54); BTM FC 2 (Niranjan Babu 15, A. Dominic Raj (OG) 45) bt Bangalore Eagles FC 1 (A. Dominic Raj 82).

Inter rides on Martinez's strike

SERIE A

Agence France-Presse
MILAN

Inter Milan stayed at the Serie A summit on Sunday after beating Atalanta 1-0 to maintain its slender lead over local rival AC Milan.

Lautaro Martinez netted the only goal of the game in Bergamo for Inter which leads Milanby a single point at the top of the division.

The Argentina striker's league-leading ninth goal of the campaign decided an engaging match which could have gone either way, with both teams having chances to break the deadlock before Martinez pounced.

Marcus Thuram and Charles De Ketelaere had goals ruled out for offside for each side while Nicolo Barella wasted a great chance to score for Inter.

But once Martinez rifled home with his left, after Berat Djimsiti sloppily gave away possession just outside his own penalty area, Atalanta had an uphill task to stop a second home defeat of the season.

The results: Atalanta 0 lost to Inter Milan 1 (Martinez 65); Bologna 1 (Fabbian 47) drew with Sassuolo 1 (Muharemovic 63).

One of the best wins of my career, says Rithvik

BADMINTON

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

Twenty-two-year-old Rithvik Sanjeevi of Tamil Nadu took a major step in his budding badminton career by clinching his first men's singles title at the Senior National championships in Vijayawada on Sunday.

"I'm thrilled. My family, coaches and trainers at the Hatsun Badminton Centre, Sivakasi, are all happy. This is my first title in two attempts at the men's Nationals, after previously winning the sub-junior u-17 Nationals," Rithvik, who was unseeded in the Senior Nationals, told *The Hindu*.

His triumph – the first by a male player from the State – was highlighted by a semifinal victory over top seed Kiran George of Kerala. "Beating Kiran is one of the best wins of my career," he said. The spark for his performance came in the team event, where he defeated former World No. 1 K. Srikanth of Andhra in the opening round.

Challenges

Rithvik's journey hasn't been easy. Last year, he suffered a ligament (ankle) tear in Bengaluru while serving for a game point in the semifinals of the All-India ranking against D.S. Saneeth. Physically recovered, he still faced mental challenges and underwent sessions with a sports psychologist, which helped him regain focus.

Rithvik.

"Rithvik is well-rounded, agile, and has excellent endurance, but he struggles when there is drift. We are working on it. He also needs to improve his accuracy, and composure in crucial moments. He is gradually progressing," said B. Rajinikanth, chief coach at Hatsun Badminton Centre.

Currently world-ranked 88 in singles, Rithvik plans to compete in more BWF Super 300 or higher tournaments and aims to be in the world's top 20 by end of 2026.

His motto remains simple: "Never give up – no matter how many times you lose or win."